



# THE SUDD INSTITUTE

RESEARCH FOR A PEACEFUL, JUST AND PROSPEROUS SOUTH SUDAN

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## SPECIAL REPORT

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### South Sudan's Crisis: Its Drivers, Key Players, and Post-conflict Prospects

*The Sudd Institute*

#### Summary

*This analysis<sup>1</sup> argues that although the crisis was triggered by power struggle within the SPLM, historical issues that remained unresolved after the CPA significantly compounded it. As well, other factors such as illiteracy, maladministration and undemocratic nature in the SPLM, lack of employment, and weak institutions all contributed to this unconscionable state of affairs.*

*After its eruption in Juba in December 2013, the conflict quickly took an ethnic dimension along historical cracks and rivalry between the Dinka and the Nuer nationalities. The ethnic dimension of this conflict made it brutally devastating, stoking fears of genocide.*

*Efforts to end this violent conflict through the IGAD-driven mediation process led to the parties signing the Cessation of Hostilities (CoH) deal in January 2014. However, the parties repeatedly violated this agreement. Fighting continues albeit in low intensity compared to its beginning.*

*To end the crisis, it is strongly recommended that the international community exert pressure on the warring parties. This may take the form of engaging the parties at the highest-level with a unified, unequivocal position. Although it is enticing, any solution that seeks to exclude Salva Kiir and Riek Machar from having a role in the interim arrangement is unsustainable.*

#### Introduction

Many people across the world are in shock as depressing reports of near genocidal massacres and destruction of villages and towns in South Sudan dominate the international media. This devastation came nearly three years after the world community, with a great sigh of relief, celebrated the declaration of independence in July 2011 with the people of South Sudan after over five decades of civil wars. It was hoped and justifiably so, that this independence was the change needed to bring peace to this land in which many generations have only known war and suffering. Now, South Sudan is in the news again for

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nothing but violent conflict that has raised fears of genocide. This conflict has its roots in political, social, and economic factors.

Since the outbreak of violence in December 2013, a large section of South Sudanese population has been displaced, especially in the Upper Nile region, which covers the states of Jonglei, Upper Nile, and Unity. The conflict took a brutal ethnic dimension immediately leading to the massacres of unknown number of civilians largely from the Nuer and Dinka nationalities. This analysis attempts to make sense of the current conflict, its immediate causes or the driving factors, and consequences. The paper concludes with recommendations on the role of the international community in resolving this conflict and restoring order, peace and stability to the war-ravaged nation.

Numerous analyses and reports pervade the international media about the probable causes of this conflict. This analysis chronicles the sequence of events leading to the violence and poses retrospectively and counterfactually this question: could anything have been done to prevent this crisis? The analysis looks at the root causes of the current conflict both to help demystify the conflict and illuminate some assumptions related to the causes of the crisis. The analysis postulates in its central premise that the violence, although coated with ethnic undertones, clearly reflects a political fight among the country's elites. But there is no question that members of the political class often reach for the ethnic card as a way to galvanize one's ethnic group to support one's political ambitions. The behavior of the elites in the construction of the new state, coupled with deplorable economic and social conditions, catalyzed the spread of violence. In essence, the allegiances of the elites to the state institutions and to the central tenets of state building have been virtually nonexistent.

## **Chronology**

The internal crises within the Sudan People's Liberation Movement and Army (SPLM/A) are as old as the institution itself. At the inception of the movement in 1983, there were disagreements over the vision as well as the leadership, leading to an internal fight between two factions. One faction was made up of 'separatists' who purportedly expressed an outright independence of South Sudan to be the primary objective of the movement and the other faction was led by 'unionists' who wanted to fight for the transformation of the old Sudan into a 'New Sudan' (Nyaba, 1996). Although the differences were basically tactical and ideological, the fight that ensued between these two factions pitted the Nuer against the Dinka in the end, and this was the beginning of the political rivalry. The SPLM unionists won eventually and the leaders of the separatist faction were either killed or absorbed into the SPLM/A. Many of the militia problems that confronted the SPLA throughout the liberation course, particularly in Upper Nile, were rooted in this history and are linked to the current crisis.

The political upheavals within the movement continued, leading to the imprisonment of then SPLM/A Deputy, Kerbino Kuanyin Bol, number five in the SPLM/A ranking, Arok Thon Arok, and their two colleagues, Martin Majier Gai and Joseph Oduho who were the secretaries for legal and external affairs, respectively. In August 1991, Riek Machar and Lam Akol, along with others, announced a coup, claiming to have overthrown the then leader of the movement, Dr. John Garang De Mabior. The attempted coup failed, but it created, for the first time a major split in the movement. The breakaway group formed the Nasir faction, after a little town located

in eastern Upper Nile where the group was based. The split was a major setback for the SPLM/A, which gave the Khartoum government an upper hand in the conflict. In fact, the movement was nearly crushed between 1992 and 1994.

Although it is difficult to quantify, it is safe to suggest that the majority of the Nuer appeared to have supported the breakaway group while the Dinka backed the mainstream. As time progressed, the SPLM Nasir faction was weakened militarily and so Riek Machar, its leader, decided to pursue a peace agreement with the Sudanese government, eventually negotiated and signed what was known as the Khartoum Peace Agreement in 1997. Part of what seemed to have pushed Riek Machar to reach a deal with Khartoum was a sense of frustration he felt after his purported coup produced no tangible results and his faction splintered into over ten groups. Khartoum embraced Riek's decision to join the government in a bid to use him in what had been a relatively successful counter-insurgency tactic against the SPLA, the arming of South Sudanese to fight one another. The split led to serious internal conflicts between the Nuers and Dinka, culminating in massive displacement and deaths in the two communities.

In 2002 however, Riek Machar realized that the Khartoum Peace Agreement was a farce as the government successfully stifled any chance for its meaningful implementation, and so he started channels of communication with John Garang, then leader of the SPLM/A. Also at this time the peace talks between the SPLA and the Khartoum government were beginning to show promise, especially after the signing of the Machakos Protocol, and Riek began to realize that he could lose even further if a deal is reached without him in South Sudan. A reunion between the two protagonists occurred in Nairobi the same year. Riek was welcomed back to the SPLM mainstream and was made the third man in the SPLM's power structure. The return of Riek Machar and Lam Akol to the SPLM helped unite the people of South Sudan just before the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005.

Following the mysterious death of Dr. John Garang in a plane crash in July 2005, his deputy, Salva Kiir Mayardit, became the SPLM chairman and commander-in-chief of the SPLA, the president of the Government of Southern Sudan, and the first vice president of the Republic of Sudan. Riek Machar became his deputy and Lam Akol became the foreign minister of the Sudan. The prospects for the referendum and independence of South Sudan propelled this unity, as South Sudan's secession was the one thing only few South Sudanese disagreed on.

In 2008, the SPLM held its Second National Convention, the first since the signing of the CPA. In that convention, signs of power struggle emerged as Riek Machar sought to contest for the SPLM chairmanship, a position that would make him president in the 2010 anticipated elections. President Salva Kiir desired to retain his position, however. Salva Kiir also expressed publicly that he did not want to work with Riek Machar and then SPLM Secretary General, Pagan Amum, intending to appoint people of his choice. The convention was hotly politicized, but eventually the delegates voted to keep the status quo to ensure continuity and unity within the party in the face of 2010 elections against Sudan's ruling party, the National Congress Party (NCP). Hence, Kiir was reconfirmed as the chairman, Riek Machar his first deputy, and Pagan Amum the secretary general.

The 2010 elections created another source of tensions within the SPLM. Salva Kiir chose Riek Machar as his running mate essentially to keep party and people's unity. However the Political

Bureau, SPLM's highest political organ, used undemocratic procedures to select party candidates for various political positions, causing damaging relations among comrades within the party. Those who were not selected to contest on the SPLM tickets stood as independent candidates, and most of them lost in the elections. This move fundamentally led to some notable rebellions, including the rebellion led by David Yau Yau, George Athor, Johnson Oliny, Gatluak Gai and others, all of them from Jonglei, Unity, and Upper Nile states. One of those who contested for gubernatorial post as an independent candidate in Unity State was Angelina Teny, Riek Machar's wife. She claimed she won the elections against Taban Deng Gai, but that the elections were allegedly rigged in Taban's favor. President Kiir had backed Taban Deng Gai's candidacy and Riek Machar backed his wife. This was another instance where the two principals stood in different camps after the 2008 party convention. Likewise, in Northern Bahr el Ghazal, Gen. Dau Aturjong, an SPLA veteran who contested for a gubernatorial position as an independent candidate complained of election rigging in favor of the SPLM nominee, Gen. Paul Malong Awan, who currently serves as South Sudan's armed forces Chief of General Staff. General Dau Aturjong recently joined the rebellion, making him the highest-ranking Dinka retired general who has joined the rebels. Obviously, he remains bitter over election results. Before joining the rebellion, sources close to both Gen. Dau and the Office of the President said the gentleman sought to meet with the president and was denied access, something he considered part of his continued sidelining by some people in the president's inner circle.

Despite the differences over the 2010 elections, the SPLM leaders stood together and steered the country towards the referendum and subsequently the independence. The people of South Sudan were more united during the referendum than any other time before. It was hoped that the leaders would capitalize on this unity to build a new state that was accommodating for all. However, these hopes were dashed just weeks before the independence when reports emerged that the president and the vice president were at odds over some articles in the transitional constitution. The president had accused the vice president of an attempt to run a parallel government. The crisis was addressed and the two leaders seemingly buried their differences. The genesis of the current intra-party power struggle is said to have re-emerged in late 2012 when high-level SPLM members of the Political Bureau visited South Sudan's ten states. The expressed aim of the state visits by the party officials was to thank the people for their unwavering, overwhelming support rendered throughout the years of liberation struggle and for leading a successful referendum that unquestionably guaranteed independence. While in the states, these political leaders quickly found that what was planned to be a congratulatory affair turned out largely as a condemnation of the party. In view of the grassroots, the ruling party had lost vision and direction, as it had not been able to deliver the badly needed essential services such as road networks, health facilities, security, and education, among others.

In light of the 2015 scheduled general elections, which, owing to the current violent conflict, are seemingly postponed now, the grassroots' message disapproving of the SPLM stewardship sent a chilling effect within the party leadership. In March 2013, after the return of the dispatched SPLM leaders from the field, a meeting of the political bureau was supposedly convened to share the reproaches from the grassroots and an argument seemed to have ensued prompting the top party leaders to trade accusations over who was to blame for this apparent failure. In that meeting, Pagan Amum, the SPLM Secretary General and the First Deputy of the SPLM, Riek Machar, are said to have challenged the President openly, blaming him for failing the party and declared their intentions to unseat him from the party chairmanship in the next SPLM National

Convention, with each of course, claiming to be a viable replacement. Riek Machar specifically raised six points outlining the key areas in which he thinks the SPLM Chairman, Salva Kiir, had failed.

This confrontation within the political bureau could also have been fueled by unconfirmed reports within the party, which placed the trigger of the crisis to an alleged meeting between President Kiir and Thabo Mbeki, the former South African president, during which President Kiir allegedly expressed his intention to step down after his term ends in 2015. According to party sources, some SPLM party leaders were apparently present at the Kiir-Mbeki meeting and might have leaked to members of the political bureau the purported news of Kiir's intention to exit from power. Consequently, party leaders who heard the possible departure of the party chairman sought to position themselves as next in line. The president, who is also the chairman of the SPLM, obviously seemed to have changed his mind and wants to continue after 2015. This revelation was surely disappointing to those who had hoped to replace him and the seemingly contentious meeting of the political bureau was likely a result of such disappointment.

At the end of the aforesaid meeting, the political bureau was reportedly divided and people were bitter. The president is described as having been particularly outraged by the challenges presented against him and he took such challenges as an attack on his person and his character. In April 2013, a month after the said meeting, the president withdrew delegated powers from Riek Machar to demonstrate his apparent displeasure. Rumors of government reshuffle followed thereafter. By July 2013, especially on the occasion of South Sudan's 2<sup>nd</sup> Independence Anniversary, the rift within the party was vivid. Pagan Amum, the SPLM Secretary General, who normally ran the ceremony of such events, was conspicuously absent. What was more poignant about the anniversary commemoration was the fact that the president, likely deliberately, refused to acknowledge the presence of Riek Machar, his deputy in the ceremony.

After the independence anniversary, the party officials were talking publicly about the internal party politics, a situation that led to more rifts. While the situation in the party was growing out of control, the president decided to dissolve the entire cabinet, removing Riek Machar, who was the vice president and Pagan Amum, who was the SPLM Secretary General in that process. The motivating factor for the dissolution of the government was evidently the party politics that had created nearly a paralysis both within the party and government structures. The president created a new government that excluded all those who disagreed with him politically, and potentially added salt to injury when he gave very senior cabinet positions to people from outside the party, and those formerly in the Sudan's ruling party, National Congress Party who had just recently joined the SPLM merely on political necessity.

Following the dissolution of the government, President Kiir, in an attempt to garner support for his new cabinet, took a regional tour to the Bahr el Ghazal based four states where he reportedly told crowds that the people he had removed from the government are corrupt and that they have failed the country. As if the exclusion of many SPLM leaders in the new government was not enough, the president pronounced the SPLM party structures dissolved in November 2013, a move that clearly threatened the political future of a number of SPLM leaders. Although the president retracted the statement later, a lot of damage was already done and out of desperation, a number of excluded party leaders were frantically trying to figure out a way to ensure their leadership relevance and political careers. So the tour and the dissolution of the party structures

essentially angered those who were removed and seemingly consolidated the two factions under Riek Machar and Pagan Amum against the president.

This unity was exhibited on December 6, 2013 when these groups held a joint press conference under the leadership of Riek Machar. The group sharply criticized the president and his new government and blamed him for dragging the country purportedly into chaos. The language of the press conference included thinly veiled threats of violence should the president not respond to their demand for dialogue. This press conference seriously heightened the internal party crises and provoked fears among citizens. The government, led by the Vice President James Wani Igga, reacted to the press conference angrily and it was obvious that the country was in deep crisis. Only a week after the press conference the violent events of December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2013 ensued.

## **Driving Factors**

### **Political Malfeasants in the SPLM**

To make sense of what was going on within the SPLM prior to the violence, it is appropriate to explore a number of factors that include power structure within the party, the weak institutional restraints on excessive power in the hands of a few individuals, lack of adherence to the party constitution, and the growing number of factions and power centers within the SPLM.

Despite the signing of the CPA and subsequently becoming a ruling party, the SPLM seems to have maintained its pre-CPA politico-military high command hierarchy. For example, when the time came in 2005 to structure the SPLM-led national government, giving positions seems to have been done on the basis of seniority in the Movement. This was demonstrated evidently when the positions of the president, vice president and the speaker of the National Legislative Assembly followed the order of this seniority. This may also explain why a number of senior party officials working in the government prefer to use their military titles instead of the official designations associated with their current positions. In the interest of maintaining discipline, order, strategic vision, and direction after the untimely death of Dr. John Garang, the longtime leader of the SPLM, it certainly made sense to follow the established structure and hierarchy as a preventive measure. While keeping the Movement's hierarchy was seen as strategic, it now presents a challenge to civilian leadership, which should be built on individual aspirations, experience, merits, and integrity. This liberation hierarchy undercuts democratic values of free and competitive politics. The state of affairs within the SPLM certainly exemplifies this reality. With the understanding that leadership can only be accessed on the order of wartime seniority, this clearly means that officials can only ascend to the top of the ladder by toeing this dictatorial line. This is proving unsustainable.

Being that most members of the party leadership are aging, and each of them eyes an opportunity to ascend to the top, the wait in the superficially long line is becoming unbearable for some, leading to uncompromising political behavior. Arguably, the growing number of factions and tensions within the party can be partly attributed to this rigid structure. When access to the top of party leadership is determined hierarchically, it seems to go contrary to the democratic ideals championed and popularized by the SPLM itself during over two decades campaign for liberty and freedom in the Sudan. This poses a clear danger to the future of the party, especially if it deprives itself of youth and new ideas. One would expect a party with

philosophy so entrenched in the fight against injustices and misrule from successive regimes in Khartoum to have loosened its grip on old dysfunctional party structures that were appropriate for wartime and adopted a new party structure that corresponds to the democratic aspirations and expectations of the people of South Sudan.

Looking at how the political crisis evolved, it is apparent that the party had no mechanisms for restraining individual powers. The president, the former vice president, and the former secretary general of the party had come out publicly against each other and it appears there is no mechanism within the party to reprimand and restrain these individuals from taking an internal dispute to the streets. This public airing of grievances seems to be deeply rooted in ill-defined communication loops and channels of accountability within the party. The formal platforms through which the party should debate and address critical issues of governance seem, at the very least, minimal. Confronted with this ostensible lack of avenues to channel redress, party officials were forced to go public on matters that could otherwise have been handled internally. This attitude may also have had something to do with Riek and Pagan's rather arrogant view of the president as less educated or that he lacks capacity as head of state.

What is more, despite claims of the need for democratic reforms within the party, Riek Machar, based on a number of interviews with party officials, wanted to cut a political deal with Salva Kiir that will make him the next chairman without necessarily going through the convention. The deal he sought was described as similar in nature to Tony Blair and Gordon Brown's agreement where Blair won the elections, but allowed Brown to complete the term. The failure of Salva Kiir to grant an endorsement to that effect partly explains the current crisis. Even though the changes advocated for in the SPLM constitution were accepted, they were not going to apply in the upcoming party convention, because the convention would need to endorse the changes first before these become effective, a situation that was only going to happen after the convention. Since there was impatience within the rank and file, the contenders did not really want to follow the party constitution to the letter and spirit. Partly, because the incumbent chairman intended to squeeze his opponents out of the party, a situation that was seen by his opponents as a threat against their political careers.

### **Political and Socio-economic Factors**

As narrated in the foregoing sections, the crisis developed strictly as a political issue within the party, but there were underlying post CPA social issues that had not been addressed. Particularly, there are three main social factors that could have played a significant role in escalating what strictly speaking, was a political dispute into an open war. These include the history of the liberation process induced ethnic rivalry, disequilibrium in the army, and poor social indicators.

As discussed previously, the SPLM right after its founding experienced many internal tensions, including the split between the unionists and separatists and the 1991 split. These splits have in one form or another pitted the Dinka community against that of the Nuer and this political rivalry had gotten worse over the years. Deadly wars have been fought between these two communities and planted bitterness and hatred. The 1991 split more than any other incident drove the two communities apart, especially after the well-known "Bor Massacre" in which thousands of Dinka civilians were killed allegedly on orders from Riek. These political feuds were turned ethnic and became a duel of superiority of one ethnic group over the other. Despite a

number of massacres, the thing that was most damaging to the social glue between the two communities was the fact that the whole area of Upper Nile region covering the three states of Jonglei, Unity and Upper was completely isolated from the rest of the country. Over 30 militia groups carved out territories within the Nuer nation and kept those territories isolated. As a result, the region did not benefit from any central administration over those years and the citizens grew divergent views from the rest of the country. Even after the CPA almost all the rebellions came from Upper Nile region. The Equatoria and Bahr el Ghazal regions, which were under SPLA control over a long period of time, seem more stable.

Ethnic rivalry and poor provision of social services make for a deadly combination. Many areas in the Upper Nile region are inaccessible because they are remote and vast, further isolating communities. The government did little in the rural areas to demonstrate its seriousness in improving people's lives. Many young people, who essentially became the white army, had not had access to formal education or jobs, and it became very easy to arouse their frustrations with the government and provided a fighting force for the rebellions. Had there been jobs and schools and good living conditions, ethnic rivalry would not have engulfed the whole population as quickly as it has been the case throughout this crisis. So it is fair to say that while political rivalries started the conflict, they may have only functioned as a trigger to social and economic issues that had built up over many years.

One other key issue that could have contributed to the violence is the issue of disproportionately higher representation of the ethnic Nuers in the army. As mentioned previously, during the civil war and particularly after the split in the SPLM/A, the Nasir faction under Riek Machar splintered into many armed ethnic militias and controlled a number of territories. Some of these militias were either allied to the Government of Sudan, the SPLA or were independent. After the signing of the CPA, President Salva Kiir in what became known as the Juba Declaration essentially invited all the militia groups to join the government and the SPLA in the name of peace. The poorly planned integration of these militias into the SPLA basically created a loophole within the rank and file of the SPLA and the fighting force became overwhelmingly ethnic Nuers. This disproportionate representation of the Nuers in the army is alleged to have fanned ethnic-based violence, as many of the militia commanders were absorbed at inflated ranks, putting them above their former foes in the SPLA.

Apart from the aforementioned social factors, which might have possibly drove the current violence gripping the South Sudanese state, there are also political and economic issues that could explain the eruption of the conflict. Politically speaking, it is not an exaggeration to state that South Sudan is practically a one-party state. This reality stems from the fact that the liberation movement turned-political party has unparalleled loyalty from the masses, thanks to its sustained focus of leading the liberation struggle for over two decades. Given this SPLM dominance, it has not been possible for any other political party to pose a strong challenge to South Sudan's ruling party, and this means that SPLM top leaders vying for the top seat in the party could afford to vigorously compete with each other internally as there is no significant external competition. In other words, lack of a strong opposition to the SPLM from without ensured that power contest among SPLM leaders intensified, as getting the party chairmanship automatically guarantees one's aspiration to occupying the highest office in the land, that of the president.

Since the signing of the CPA in 2005, economic and political power have been concentrated in the hands of the ruling class, and this undoubtedly by and large left the public susceptible and vulnerable to the whims and machinations of some political entrepreneurs who would do anything to get to or remain in power. A quick look at the way public expenditure was conducted during the interim period leading into the post-independence period reveals that Juba was literally taking over eighty per cent of the national budget alone. It goes without saying, therefore, that the ten states and seventy-nine counties combined have had to share less than twenty per cent to run their affairs. In a country where there is a vibrant private sector, this might not be particularly problematic. However, given the fact that the South Sudanese economy had to largely depend on the public sector, and this gave the same political elite unrivalled influence to direct things as they see fit even when this implies preying on vulnerable youth. In a sense, understanding the nexus between youth unemployment and insecurity lies here.

### **Key Players in this Crisis**

As introduced in the foregoing sections, the current conflict derived from an internal fight within the SPLM primarily over leadership, but it has engulfed the whole country dragging along regional and international players as well. One of the leading players in this conflict therefore, is the SPLM whose leadership is the main cause of the conflict. As the champion of liberation, the SPLM is synonymous with South Sudan and South Sudanese government. This is because over the last 30 years, the SPLM was the key player in the liberation struggle and it has basically swallowed all the historical South Sudanese parties. A whole generation born and raised in SPLM/A control territories, which makes up over 70% of the South Sudanese population, only knows the SPLM. Consequently, the history of liberation associated with the SPLM and the overwhelming support it has among the civil population make it plausible to imagine that this party might rule South Sudan for many years to come. The constitution of the SPLM stipulates that the party chairman is its flag bearer for presidential elections, a position that guarantees one to ultimately become president of South Sudan. Therefore, the fight within the SPLM is essentially a fight over national power. Given that its constitution does not allow for free contest for power within the party, the top political elites do not have much choice because leaving the SPLM is not a winning proposition, so internal struggle for power is inevitable.

The power contest within the SPLM is between three distinct factions as previously discussed. The main opposition faction is the Nasir faction led by Riek Machar, alternatively known as SPLM in Opposition. The Nasir faction dates back to the 1991 split when Riek Machar, after a failed coup attempt, led an SPLM/A faction that later joined the Khartoum government. The key personality here is Riek Machar who wants to become the next SPLM chairman and subsequently the president. Taban Deng Gai, former Governor of Unity State who in his own right is a key player and Alfred Lado Gore, former national minister of environment, flank Riek Machar. Gai is currently the chief negotiator for Riek-led faction and Alfred Lado Gore is currently Riek Machar's deputy, having now grandly named himself the faction's "chief ideologue." Alfred Gore is a veteran SPLM leader who ran as an independent candidate in the 2010 elections in Central Equatoria State after the SPLM political bureau refused to endorse him as the candidate for the position of governor. He is a Bari and the highest-ranking politician, who is not a Nuer that has joined the rebellion.

The second opposition faction of the SPLM, which is really almost a loose alliance, is a group commonly known as the “Garang Boys” whose many of its members were detained immediately after the outbreak of violence. Key among the personalities in this faction are Madam Rebecca Nyandeng de Mabior, widow of the late leader of the SPLM, Dr. John Garang, Pagan Amum, former SPLM secretary general, Deng Alor Kuol, former foreign minister of Sudan and former minister of cabinet affairs of South Sudan, Kosti Manibe, former minister of finance. This faction is in a disadvantaged position in relation to the two-armed factions led by President Kiir and Riek Machar. Hence, they have a lot at stake, as they are likely to lose a great deal of political leverage if they do not find a good deal through the negotiations in Addis or through intra-SPLM dialogue.

The third faction is obviously the mainstream faction led by President Salva Kiir and a number of senior SPLM leaders. Key among these is the President himself, his deputy James Wani Igga, Kuol Manyang Juk, the defense minister, Daniel Awet Akot, former deputy speaker, Nhial Deng Nhial, the government’s chief negotiator in the IGAD-led talks, among others. Of recent, Paul Malong Awan, the current Chief of General Staff of the SPLA, has become an equal key player due to his closeness to the president and influence in the army. Barring any radical changes starting with a political settlement to the crisis, this group seems to think of itself as being on the winning end by entrenching themselves into power now through taking over the party and controlling the government, hence would accommodate those in opposition on their own terms. Likewise, the SPLA, which is the national army that is still closely associated with the SPLM, is also a key player in the current conflict.

After the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), the SPLA was recognized as the official army of Southern Sudan and subsequently the Republic of South Sudan. It has been very challenging to transform this guerrilla army into a professional one. Particularly, the poorly thought through absorption of a number of former Khartoum allied militia groups created a lot of resentments within the SPLA and created fierce resistance to transformation of the army. The absorbed force, although mixed with those that have been serving in the SPLA throughout its existence or the SPLA proper as it is called, had remained loyal to the warlords that had brought them into South Sudan’s national army. Nearly all the militia groups were based in the Upper Nile region with very few from Equatoria and Bahr el Ghazal. A number of sources suggest that the combination of absorbed militia groups and some in the SPLA proper tilted the balance of power within the SPLA, making the Nuer ethnic group dominant, representing nearly 70% of the whole army, and this may have given Riek Machar the confidence that he could take power by force.

When the violence broke out in December 2013, most of the former militia groups defected in support of the rebellion, which is what triggered the ethnic tinge of the conflict. The SPLA is largely now made up of majority Dinka and the rebels are composed primarily of Nuer. This situation certainly presents a serious challenge to any security sector reform agenda that awaits the political settlement of the conflict. This composition makes it hard for any one side to achieve a decisive military victory.

## **Regional Actors**

The conflict has understandably attracted regional actors. Some of the key regional actors include Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) member countries, among which Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia and Sudan are key players. Uganda in particular has provided military support to the government. The intervention of Uganda in the South Sudanese affairs is informed by personal relationship between Museveni and Kiir as well as the apparent economic interests. What is more is the historical relationship between Riek Machar and the Uganda's Lord Resistance Army and so Museveni does see ascension of Riek Machar to power in South Sudan as a likely threat to his regime. Kenya, although it has not contributed any troops in support of the government, is seemingly in support of the president but it is also playing a mediating role much more. Ethiopia is the lead mediating country among the IGAD member states, although there have been unconfirmed rumors of Ethiopian field commanders offering aid to the rebels.

Sudan, on the other hand, has been accused publicly by the South Sudanese government of aiding rebels, a charge Khartoum denies. Sudan instead accused South Sudan of supporting Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and SPLA-North rebels. The tensions and counter-accusations between Sudan and South Sudan predate the crisis and so it is not really surprising because the two nations do not have any trust towards each other. In light of a longstanding distrust between the two countries, if not managed properly, the current tensions could result in an open confrontation between the two countries, jeopardizing the cooperation agreements.

Although IGAD leads the mediation efforts, African Union has been playing a positive role behind the scene and through the on-going work of the Commission of Inquiry led by former Nigerian President Obasanjo. African Union would need to join the international community in bringing pressure to bear on the parties to end the crisis. Although IGAD has succeeded in getting the parties to sign cessation of hostilities agreements and in getting the two contenders to meet face-to-face, it is yet to ensure its implementation, and the success of IGAD to mediate a sustainable political settlement remains the hope but a shaky one.

## **International Actors**

In terms of what is fueling the conflict, there are no clearly identified international actors that are fueling the conflict. However, China and the United States are allegedly competing for influence over the government of South Sudan. Although the United States is conspicuously the main player in terms of its influence over the government and the SPLM factions, there is fear that South Sudan was getting drawn more towards China because of its oil investments in the country and that worries the United States. Recently, both the president and the government spokesperson accused the United States of having backed the rebels and the coup in an attempt to get a new government that will renegotiate oil deals. The president specifically accused the US of having proposed an interim government that does not include him. China has largely remained silent, but it is doing a lot of diplomatic work behind the scenes to ensure that its interest in the region and the country remains protected. Reports emerged recently of China supplying weapons to the South Sudanese government. Russia has also entered the scene giving the government of South Sudan a cover at the UN Security Council as the council was contemplating imposing sanctions on the warring parties. If it picks up steam, any tension between these giants could potentially prolong the peace efforts.

Another group of international actors includes the United Nations (UN) and the Troika (US, Norway and the UK). The UN through the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) has been marred in the local conflict. Both warring sides accused the UN of supporting the other. The government particularly has been very critical of the UN and its motives and that has created an unhealthy relationship between the two institutions. Particularly, the former UNMISS head of mission's close relationship with the rebel leader, Riek Machar prior to the crisis, has perhaps fueled local suspicions against the UNMISS. The UN body, however, has been doing a very difficult job protecting civilians on its bases and catering for their needs. The visit of the UN Secretary General, Ban Ki Moon, seemingly resolved the tensions. Troika was formed during the CPA negotiations to provide financial and technical support to the talks and help the parties to navigate very difficult issues. This group has been reactivated again to do very similar activities to help the parties to arrive at a settlement. The troika certainly has its own interests and it will try to push the parties to reach a settlement that fits into those interests, which may complicate the process.

## **Consequences**

### **Political and Socio-economic Impact**

The eruption of this unconscionable military confrontation, which has clearly inflicted untold suffering and destruction on innocent citizenry in terms of lives lost, their way of life, individual and social relations, and certainly not to mention damage to property, showcases in great measure the inexcusable failure of collective leadership on the part of those entrusted, top-leveled stewards. Instead of managing their differences in a constructive manner, the country's political elites unwisely allowed carnage to freely roam the streets, and this has far greater consequences in political and socio-economic terms.

In conventional wisdom, one of the unpleasant realities of any war situation is that it divides communities, and this is exactly what is happening in South Sudan following the outbreak of the current war. Now more than ever in the history of the South Sudanese people, the level of distrust and hatred is simply unimaginable, and this situation in part, explains the unwarranted, callous and indiscriminate killings of innocent, unarmed civilians that both sides to the conflict meted out on those suspected of supporting the other side. If this state of affairs continues unabated immediately, it would certainly help entrench an already intolerable social mistrust and hatred making any conciliatory work extremely difficult. Judging from the reported ethnic-driven targeted killings, that have taken place across South Sudan since the outbreak of violence, the damage done to societal fabric and communal relations thus far, although it is not easy at present to completely quantify, seems significantly higher.

Following nearly two days of fighting in Juba at the start of the crisis this past December, ethnic Nuer members were reportedly unjustifiably killed by forces allied to the government. It did not take long before a counter slaughtering of the ethnic Dinka in places such as Bor, Akobo, Bentiu, and Malakal among others by the rebel forces and their armed civilian allies, ensued. Forces loyal to rebel leader, Riek Machar, allegedly murdered over two hundred people this past Easter in the Unity State capital of Bentiu after recapturing it from the government troops. As the news has it, those who lost their lives were from a wide spectrum of ethnic backgrounds including different South Sudanese and Sudanese communities. What appears to be the crime of these unarmed,

non-threatening people who were mercilessly butchered was that they were simply seen as supporters of the other side of the conflict. Two days later in the wake of the fall of Bentiu to the rebels on April 15, 2014, a reported armed youth in what appeared like a retaliatory mob mobilized in Jonglei's Capital Bor, attacked the UN base where the internally displaced people from the Nuer ethnic community were taking refuge, killing over fifty innocent civilians. These killings understandably shocked the world, as they seem to suggest a step closer to the dreaded possibility of genocide. As a result, South Sudan saw very unusual high-level visits by the US Secretary of State, John Kerry, UN Secretary General, Ban Ki Moon, and the UN Human Rights Chief, Navi Pillay to push the parties to embrace peaceful resolution of the crisis.

In this heightened, polarized war, there are a number of potential political impacts that the South Sudanese society would have to grapple with. There is a possibility that some South Sudanese may find themselves most likely to identify politically along ethnic lines, and if this happens, the consequences in terms of instability – political and otherwise, are great. If not handled well, the development of an ethnic-based politics akin to what Kenya has whereby the Kikuyu, the majority tribe, makes sure that a Luo person, from the third largest ethnic community, does not come to power. If this situation were to happen in South Sudan, it would be extremely difficult to achieve peace and stability. What is more is that when large ethnic groups like the Dinka or Nuer are able to achieve a political outcome, say winning an election or coming to power militarily, it will have a corrosive effect on a sense of nationalism. Such groups will most likely identify more with their ethnic groups and politics will largely be driven by ethnic solidarity rather than it being a merit-based system in terms of ideas one espouses, experience, and competence.

One more potential issue with the polarity of this conflict is the position of the people of the three states of Equatoria, who are currently keeping their distance from the conflict, except for a few individuals who are calling on the Equatorians to choose a side. The position of the Equatoria is undoubtedly crucial for the future stability of this country; either they will maintain their non-involvement, create a middle way or pick a side in the conflict. There is doubt it is not possible to contemplate a monolithic Equatoria position, as there can be no uniform political aspirations among all Equatorians. Their role in contributing to the debate about the future of South Sudan is, however, going to emerge possibly after a political settlement has been reached over the current crisis when the debate moves to the question of federalism as a system of governance in South Sudan. Right now, more and more calls in favor of federalism are being made by Equatorians. But all the three governments of the Equatoria region seem to support the national government and have publicly condemned the rebel organization. However, there is fear among the Equatorians that the current negotiations are largely between the Dinka and the Nuers, hence they want to be on the table as another party.

The political space has also suffered and might not be very easy to reclaim. Those who have been following political developments in South Sudan would know very well that there has never been an even playing field in terms of how politics has been played. As mentioned previously, mismanaged or controlled political processes in some ways explain the instant rebellions that sprang up in the wake of the 2010 elections, particularly in Jonglei, Unity and Upper Nile states. The undisputed result of these insurrections is the proliferation of many militia groups that openly wreaked havoc in the communities they targeted and this no doubt seriously hardened or restrained social and political relations. Early in 2013, the political environment in South Sudan

falsely seemed to be improving. This came after the government was able to successfully agree with a Unity State based armed rebel group, South Sudan Liberation Army (SSLA) for the latter to denounce violence and accept being absorbed into the SPLA. In addition to this government-SSLA deal, another important step undertaken to seemingly ensure conciliatory work through enlarging a political space was a presidential amnesty given to politicians and several military officers, who had been detained, accused, at least in the court of public opinion, of running subversive activities against the state.

While the impact of the aforementioned insurgencies was certainly devastating to ordinary South Sudanese who had to bear this in their daily living, in a way, this pales in comparison to the situation the country is currently undergoing with respect to the damage caused in social, political, and economics terms. With the division among the top political SPLM leadership at its peak, coupled with the resultant ethnic division, it is safe to say that the political impact of the on-going war is huge and requires concerted, deliberate efforts to transform it. Given the polarized war environment that currently exists in the country, it is not realistic to expect the conduct of elections any time soon, and this reality only helps to entrench the status quo, which most people are not particularly happy with. For any country, regardless of how mature it is politically speaking, elections tend to raise emotions, so to think of having them in South Sudan in a very short order after some sort of resolution to the conflict is found, would be simply too unrealistic.

One unfortunate, not so clever way of conducting public affairs that the ruling elites have embraced since the signing of CPA has been a ‘single task’ approach whereby many pressing issues were literally swept under the carpet with the aim of being addressed later. This attitude is best shown by how the entirety of the interim period was approached, downplaying the importance of reconciliation processes in ensuring healthy transition. Instead of the SPLM working to translate some of its wartime rhetoric into reality so as to cement the gains made, the common preoccupation of the political leadership during the said period was to ensure that referendum took place in order to settle the questions of unity or separation once and for all. The view shown towards the gathering mountains of challenges by those tasked with guiding the state was usually that these issues will be settled later, intimating an apparent lack of ability to multi-task in a very high-paced environment. Sadly, the expected gains seemed to have never materialized, but the realities that have been perennially avoided have now gone burst with damming consequences. The other preoccupation by the SPLM elite has been corruption, which has nearly bankrupted the infant nation.

Furthermore, one other unwelcomed result of the conflict is the economic damage caused to livelihoods of the individual citizens and public finances, which directly affects service delivery and development matters. The outbreak of the war has not only resulted in the loss of lives, pillaging and destruction of property, but also crippling of the people’s sources of livelihoods. For example, the conflict created a very insecure environment, which uprooted people from their homes and this means that those who depend on farming, fishing, and animal keeping both for subsistence and income are no longer able to have the favorable environment for their economic activities. This in turn implies that the quality of health of the population considerably decreases, as individuals or households will now have to depend on handouts from their relatives and international humanitarian organizations. More over, due to the conflict, oil production, which is the main source of income for the government, is significantly reduced and consequently, this means less resource envelop for the government. With limited financial resources to spend on

priorities such as running the institutions, delivering basic services to the citizenry, investment in infrastructural development, waging of the war itself among others, the government's efforts become depressed. Unfortunately, issues of war come to the fore in this situation, and this implies that basic services and development get the back seat.

Towards the end of 2013, the economic outlook for South Sudan was somewhat seen as promising following the reopening of oil wells after the two Sudans decided to reset their rocky relations by resolving to peacefully address their differences. In late November last year, the Government of South Sudan convened an investment conference that brought together various potential investors who were interested in exploring investment opportunities in the new republic. After its conclusion, there was a feeling in certain quarters that the conference was, indeed, going to significantly improve the overall economic situation in the country. But in what looks like a sheer slap in the face of this apparent optimism, the outbreak of fighting in Juba merely under three weeks following the completion of the conference, seriously challenged this upbeat economic prospect, albeit temporarily until a settlement of the matter is reached.

The prevailing war conditions in the country have had negative impact on business output and employment opportunities. Production, like anything else in the society, is sensitive to insecurity, and this is exactly what is happening right now in South Sudan. Because of the fighting mainly, although not exclusively in the most war-affected states of Jonglei, Unity and Upper Nile, most businesses are closed and others that might still be opened are not fully functioning as before. This implies that production has gone down due to the closure and lack of new businesses entering into the market. The same is true for employment, as those self-employed workers as well as the public sector employees, are displaced, hence currently not engaged in economically productive activities. Insecurity and the financial difficulties have also led to reduced skilled labor that normally comes from the region.

One bitter reality of war is that it tends to make people poorer and this is what South Sudanese are currently experiencing. Given the very insecure, unpredictable military environment, many people for whom the fighting has altered economic activities find it very difficult to support themselves and their extended families. Without a stable source of income to keep up with daily personal and family needs, poverty becomes a reality to some of the people caught in this situation. In other words, the level of poverty only gets worse with the on-going war environment. In the hardest hit places by the war, it is not an overstatement to say that the sources of livelihoods such as farming, fishing, cattle herding as well as trade are severely affected and possibly wiped out for some people. That is, mass displacement because of fighting necessitated that people abandon the sort of economic activities that they otherwise were doing. Practically, this means that people are not going to be able to save or have enough to invest in new economic opportunities, and this translates into a deterioration of overall savings and investment in the country. Also, due to insecurity, people are not farming or planting, and this exposes the population to grim realities of food insecurity and hunger, both immediately and in longer terms. So the current talks about a looming famine are as real as they get because the war has turned everything upside down, and this calls for a serious demonstration on the part of the sides that are engaged in fighting to bring this to a speedy end.

Apart from oil, which seems like the only South Sudanese commodity that makes it into the international market, the youngest nation is largely running an import-based economy. With the

war in full swing, it is not very difficult to see what is happening with imports. Companies that are bringing goods and services into South Sudan now take extreme care so as to carefully decide how and where they could supply those imports. For the most part, the Upper Nile states seem out of reach to these companies, whether from Kenya, Uganda or Sudan, right now due to insecurity. Concerning oil, South Sudan's presumptive export commodity, the reported shutdowns of the Unity based wells suggest a reduction in volume. As a result, reduction in oil production weakens the country's financial infrastructure. In a nutshell, the fighting reduces imports and exports. This in turn significantly shrinks the economic growth leading to more unemployment and poverty. This is because the purchasing power of many people is obliterated by the conflict.

Lastly, the conflict has impacted educational infrastructure and opportunities for a largely illiterate society. In the Upper Nile region, schools have been destroyed, services suspended, and the population displaced. This has both short and long-term consequences for education in the region as well as the country. The short-term consequences constitute postponed educational processes for the population. The long-term consequences include an economically deprived generation, eventually posing security threats for the country. When peace comes, there will be need for heavy investments in this sector, implying serious economic implications for the country.

### **Recommendations For Ending the War**

The international community has been a major partner of the government since the signing of the CPA in 2005. Most of the efforts from the international partners had gone into capacity building and the provision of basic services. When the violence broke out in December 2013, members of the international community and partners of the government of South Sudan were equally shocked like all the citizens about the sudden return of violence to the nascent nation. Retrospectively, people are rightly asking whether the international partners, particularly the UN, the United States and members of the Troika, could have done anything to help the warring parties to avert the crisis. South Sudanese citizens wonder whether the US with all its capabilities and influence on both parties could have helped the SPLM to peacefully resolve its internal contradictions and avoid the bloodshed. People are asking similar questions of UNMISS and wondering what kind of peace was being kept if it was unable to detect and prevent the occurrence of this violence. Not all citizens in South Sudan are under the illusion that the situation was clear and straight forward, but still more is desired of the international community.

It is not the citizens alone that are posing these questions; the government has also been vocal publicly about the fact that it is concerned the United States could be supporting the rebels. It is no secret also that the government had thought that UNMISS was helping the rebels. These accusations of course may be false or true, but the fundamental issue is that both the UN and the US had not communicated with the government adequately during the crisis and this has fueled suspicions hitherto. Moreover, during the crisis, a number of donor countries, particularly the US and European countries have issued a number of critical press releases condemning both parties for committing atrocities and citing the failure of the government to protect civilians. These justifiable gestures were not taken lightly in the government circles and there were and there remain uneasy feelings that the western countries want the government to fall. The government has also seen the severe reduction or the suspension of donor aid from these countries with the claim that the humanitarian situation is now a priority over development as another punishment

of the country and a sign of wishing the current government to falter. These feelings are probably waning, especially after the visit of Secretary Kerry of the United States.

In light of said suspicions of the government towards the international community and particularly of the Western countries, it is important for these countries to reconsider their approach towards helping end this crisis. First, the international community should focus on ending the current devastating war in South Sudan by exerting positive pressure on the warring parties. We recommend a constructive diplomatic engagement instead of antagonistic or coercive diplomacy. This includes ceasing any unhelpful media campaign against either the government or the rebels. The caveat of course is the fact that the international organizations, which are mandated to protect human rights, should continue to report on violations of such rights. A constructive diplomacy means that the international community should drop its pursuit of sanctions against South Sudan or individuals within the government of South Sudan and the rebels because sanctions tend to antagonize. When the US unveiled sanctions against two commanders, each from the warring parties, these individuals became more popular. We fear that sanctions might actually prolong the conflict by producing insufficient incentives for the warlords to denounce violence. We prefer constructive engagement of the warring parties at high level. High-level constructive diplomatic engagement, which could include close door meetings with the leaders on both sides of the conflict and offering solutions and threats without making them lose faith, is likely to be more effective in influencing the warring parties than engagement at the lower level.

The move taken by the US to send the Secretary of State John Kerry made a huge difference and a momentum towards reaching a peaceful settlement of the conflict. This kind of engagement needs to be sustained and focused with the recognition that negotiating parties should be allowed to address the real issues instead of rushing to sign something only to celebrate international efforts. To ensure that the momentum generated by John Kerry and Ban Ki Moon is sustained, both gentlemen should come to Addis Ababa once again to both demonstrate their personal commitment to helping the process and to exert that positive pressure on the parties.

The international community may be tempted to join the call for the exclusion of both President Kiir and Riek Machar from a transitional government. This is indeed an enticing proposition since both leaders are seen to be the cause of the current crisis. However, this is actually a trap that the international community should steer away from. The proposition is impractical because these leaders hold the key to permanent peace in South Sudan because they have got the constituencies. For example, if President Kiir is excluded from power and he does not support that arrangement, his men in the army will definitely threaten any new government. Particularly, the Chief of General Staff of the SPLA, Paul Malong, given his influence in the army, is someone who should be approached carefully. Anything that removes President Kiir from power will be interpreted as a defeat; hence his supporters will not accept it, especially if President Kiir is unhappy with such arrangement. The same is true for Riek Machar. After all, this crisis resulted when Riek Machar lost his position as vice president and he will not settle for anything less than access to power. Anything that excludes them from power is a no deal. A simple question could drive this point home more succinctly. Creating a transitional government that excludes Kiir and Riek may look appealing, but what kind of power and who holds that power to remove them from their current positions? They command considerable following among the communities of Dinka and Nuer. They are basically the reason that this violent conflict is being seen as a conflict

between the Dinka and Nuer. The most practical approach to ending the war is a transitional government of which both President Kiir and Riek Machar are part, along with other important stakeholders, including the former detainees. The transitional government to be led by both leaders should then reconcile people, conduct census, make a people driven permanent constitution, support a national dialogue and establish systems and institutions and hold elections. During the transitional period, which should not be more than three years, Salva and Riek should jointly go to Nuer and Dinka people and apologize publicly and ask both communities to reconcile and live together in peace. Ideally, it would be preferable if Salva and Riek accept to transition the country to peace and harmony and not run in the elections, which would follow. This would be a demonstration of selfless leadership South Sudanese are currently yearning for.

However, a transitional government where the leaders share power without considerable reform agenda will not bring a durable solution. The international community, perhaps through building a coalition within Europe, should support an agreement that incorporates grand transformation agenda in a manner that benefits the average South Sudanese. Any power sharing agreement can be a win-win mechanism for the citizens and the politicians if such an agreement includes an elaborate reform agenda including a broad based new constitution and social development.

In light of this caution, it is important for the international community, Swiss Development Corporation in particular, to provide expertise and advice on how best the parties should find a deal that will guarantee lasting peace and reconcile political interests of the warring parties. Any agreement that is going to produce a win-lose outcome will not last even when losing is only perceived. Hence, the donors and partners should support the call for civil society involvement in the peace process and support the call for an all-encompassing political reform through constitutional democracy. This means that the international partners should mobilize both the home countries and the regional governments to support IGAD and ensure that the parties are negotiating in good faith and that other stakeholders are heard at the negotiation table. It will also mean that the partners in the international community should advocate for a continuing political reform process that includes other political parties and act as a voice for citizens in the negotiation process to ensure that the military and political elites are not cutting deals for themselves at the expense of the poor South Sudanese who have borne the brunt of this conflict.

### **Peace, Healing, Reconciliation and Justice**

Once a political settlement is reached, it is important to begin the process of national healing forthwith. The national fabric as discussed in the previous sections is torn and its social glue is debased. It is going to take a monumental lifting to rebuild the nation. Hence, the Swiss Development Corporation and other donors should support the healing process. Much of the support needed is of course financial, but also supporting a political settlement that ensures a clear road map for national healing, is going to be very critical. Efforts at the national level are important, but a lot of work for rebuilding and healing this nation will happen at the local level (states, counties, and even payam levels). This is because the Nuer and Dinka neighbors who got entangled in this conflict live at that level and their need to heal and reconcile must be as local as possible while the national platform remains. The tradeoff between peace and accountability are well established; therefore, we suggest that many efforts are placed on the healing while pursuing issues of accountability and justice as secondary in consolidating peace and reconciliation efforts

in the long-term. This might be made possible by first establishing what kind of reconciliation the people of South Sudan want and need, as the experiences of other countries can only be inspirational but not transplanted. For example, a South Sudanese process might be one that emphasizes truth telling, recognition of guilt and apology rather a punitive process. The 1999 Wunlit peace model marks an ideal point of departure for South Sudanese context.

### **Support in Providing Public Goods and Services**

While humanitarian needs are urgent and should be the immediate priority of Switzerland and others, we recommend Switzerland to continue its development projects in the Equatoria and Northern Bahr el Ghazal, which are relatively calm. This is part of peacebuilding process and it sends a clear message to those communities that peace or stability is rewarded with development and, of course, violence is antithetical to development activities. It is very important to support these projects while supporting the humanitarian efforts in the short-term.

After a peace settlement, however, it is recommended for the International Community to embark on helping South Sudan with building tangible public goods such as infrastructure, education and health services as part of the potential peace agreement. These efforts conform to what Dr. John Garang had envisioned as peace through development. Even if South Sudan signs peace today, it will find it hard to become stable unless public goods are prioritized. South Sudan's instability does not only affect the region, it also affects the whole world through ripple effects. Once built, roads and power infrastructure have ripple effects on other sectors, including the security sector. Roads can connect farmers with markets, bring people closer together through easy movements, and make it easy for the security forces to move easily when enforcing laws and protecting people. Education and health can improve the economic production of South Sudanese, which can result in a sustainable stability.

### **Conclusion**

To conclude, it is important to reiterate that this conflict resulted from a poorly managed political dispute within the SPLM, however, a number of driving factors including the history of liberation, ethnic rivalry, internal SPLM structural problems, socio-economic and military factors all exacerbated the crisis. Due to political and socio-economic factors, the conflict quickly took both ethnic and regional dimensions. Many stakeholders have entered the theatre in this conflict including a number of SPLM factions, regional players, international players and the South Sudan civil society. Some of these key actors are influencing both the spread of violence and promotion of the peace process.

The conflict needs to end urgently to avert the looming famine and other catastrophic humanitarian situations associated with it. The United States, Troika and the UN in particular and in general the international community have a special role to play in terms of providing the much needed pressure to get the parties to resume negotiations committed to finding a peaceful resolution of the conflict. The donor community and regional organizations such as IGAD and AU should join hands and exert all necessary efforts to end the carnage. In a nutshell, it is important for all concerned parties to make positive diplomatic engagements at the highest level a top priority. This includes possible punitive measures against repeated violations of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement.

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## About Sudd Institute

The Sudd Institute is an independent research organization that conducts and facilitates policy relevant research and training to inform public policy and practice, to create opportunities for discussion and debate, and to improve analytical capacity in South Sudan. The Sudd Institute's intention is to significantly improve the quality, impact, and accountability of local, national, and international policy- and decision-making in South Sudan in order to promote a more peaceful, just and prosperous society.