

## Situation in South Sudan

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### Introduction

South Sudan, located in northeastern Africa, is estimated to have 76% of the population require urgent humanitarian assistance in 2022. Since its independence on January 9<sup>th</sup> of, 2011 and the end of the civil war on February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2022, South Sudan is still undergoing a major



*Victims of ethnic violence in line for emergency food rations.*

crisis. There has been a slow progression since the peace agreement's implementation, ending the long-lasting civil war of 6 years. Not only does the country remain highly hazardous, but the economy is also plunging due to the continued conflicts of gang outbreaks, ethnic conflicts, and climate change from unprecedented floods that lead to massive displacement and destruction of crops.

Of the ongoing intercommunal violence and sexual violence toward women and girls, over 9.4 million people will require humanitarian assistance. Of the 9.4 million people, 2 million are internally displaced, and 2.2 million have sought refuge abroad. However, the inter-communal violence we speak of isn't just from gang conflicts but also political conflicts. There are still political crises, even with the president and vice president signing the peace treaty. This leads to an empty placement for the solution for what the sudden flood has created for the economy or food security. About 6.6 million people are expected to face extreme food insecurity and malnutrition levels. This also makes South Sudan one of the worst food insecurity emergencies in the world.

### Background

From the end of the six years of war on January 9<sup>th</sup> of 2011, South Sudan finally gained its long-fought independence from Sudan, the world's newest nation. However, the new country's optimism shattered into pieces to another seven-year civil war in 2013 between a political disagreement between President Salva Kiir and vice-president Riek Marcher that led to Marcher's removal as vice president. This began as the violence erupted between the Sudan People's Liberation Army and the two largest ethnic groups in South Sudan.

Soldiers from the Dinka ethnic group aligned with Kiir, and those from the Nuer ethnic groups supported Marcher. Since the Dinka ethnic groups and the Nuer ethnic groups had conflicts over pastures and cattle rangelands, and the two men represented each ethnic group, the political fight quickly morphed into an all-out ethnic conflict. The violence was widespread, reaching almost every state in the country as armed groups targeted civilians along ethnic lines, committed rape and sexual violence, destroyed property and looted villages, and recruited children. Over 1,000 people were killed, and another 100,000 were displaced alone in the first week of fighting. All the factors above continued to drive conflicts and misinformation about ethnically motivated attacks and counter-attacks to reinforce distrust.

In 2015, with no military solution to the conflict after tens of thousands had been killed and more than 1.6 million people had been displaced, the Security Council imposed an international sanction for a peace agreement. In August, 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015, The Intergovernmental Authority on Development contributed to facilitating a peace agreement, and Kiir signed the Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan (ARCSS) with Machar as a first step toward ending the civil. However, the



*Civilians flee fighting at the United Nations base in South Sudan.*

contract broke down with the start of Battle of Juba in 2016, resulting in the displacement of tens of thousands of people. In 2017 and 2018, a series of cease-fires were negotiated and subsequently violated between the two sides and other factions.

Finally, in 2018, Kiir and Machar again participated in negotiations mediated by Uganda and Sudan in June 2018. Over the following weeks, Kiir and Machar agreed to sign the final agreement, the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS), as an attempt to revive the ARCSS in 2015. With that, the civil war ended on February 22<sup>nd</sup> of, 2022. However, despite the end of the civil war and the agreement, the United Nations have stated that violence has renewed, and the implemented peace treaty has only severely threatened the peace and stability in South Sudan.

## **Problems Raised**

### *Escalation of Violence*

Although the civil war ended on February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2022, with President Salva Kiir and Vice-President Riek Marcher signing the R-ARCSS in 2018, violence is being renewed, especially feuds between ethnic groups over cattle and land. The Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan notes with grave concern the recent escalation in violence in six of the ten states countrywide.

Not only of inter-communal conflict but also sexual abuses by security forces and armed groups have taken a heavy toll on civilians. Starting with the inter-communal violence within the ethnic groups, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) documented hundreds of civilian killings and injuries, arbitrary arrests, abductions, torture, and ill-treatment cases. Since June



*The first places to be burned down when inter-communal violence erupted in February 2022*

2020, ongoing hostilities in Central Equatoria, Jonglei, Lakes, Unity, Western Bahr el-Ghazal, and Warrap have resulted in hundreds of deaths and injuries, displacement of more than 80,000 others, and led to the suspension of humanitarian services in some areas. The Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan stated that they had documented abuses involving beheadings, rape victims forced to carry severed heads, victims being burned alive, and days of brutal sexual assaults. Initial reports from Leer county indicate that some

40,000 people have fled the violence, with thousands reportedly crossing the Nile to Fangak, a community in Jonglei state. However, little do they know that Jonglei state isn't a safe place to run to.

In Jonglei, Lakes, and Warrap States, the violence has been characterized by intercommunal strife and revenge killings. Many attacks involve the South Sudan People's Defence Forces (SSPDF) and members of armed opposition groups. Not only are intercommunal violence in the states a problem, but sexual and gender-based violence continues to be a pervasive characteristic of the ongoing attacks in South Sudan. Brutal rapes, including gang rapes, have been central to the violations in Warrap and Lakes States. Two survivors reported being repeatedly raped and gang-raped after escaping hiding to find food for their children. Another recently given birth woman was raped and severely beaten for three days. Investigators from the military camp orchestrating the gang rapes say sexual abuse has been used as a weapon by all sides in South Sudan's civil conflict. Commission Chair Yasmin Sooka stated that "the levels of violence and suffering particularly against women, the elderly and children are alarming, and demonstrate an utter disregard for human life, making the revitalized peace agreement a mockery." He also stated, "In meetings with United Nations officials here, we tried to convey the message that it is critical donors and member states continue to monitor the peace agreement, security sector reform and ensure constitutional legislation is pushed through before elections."

### *Lack of Health Care*

According to UNICEF, South Sudan is one of the most challenging countries in the world for a child. South Sudan has the poorest access to health services, a limited number of health workers, and a lack of access to health services have produced some of the worst health indicators in the world. South Sudan has the highest maternal mortality rate in the world, at more than 2,054 out of every 100,000 live births. Around 75 percent of all child deaths in South Sudan are due to preventable diseases, such as diarrhea, malaria, and pneumonia. However, with the appearance of Covid-19, the healthcare situation has become seriously dangerous. The United Nations Security Council states that Covid-19

is potentially the greatest threat to South Sudan's fragile health system. This is where we have to keep in mind that South Sudan is facing the twin threat of Covid-19 and escalating violence which has gotten too severe to be called inter-communal violence. The Secretary-General's latest



report on the situation states that the coronavirus outbreak will hit the country.

*The hospital situation in Juba, South Sudan*

Covid-19 isn't the only disease South Sudan has to keep a keen eye on, as Guinea-Worm Disease has reported 1,028 guinea worm cases from 304 endemic villages.

Not only physical health but mental health; South Sudan has just emerged from a long civil war, and many of its people likely have post-traumatic stress disorder. As the International Committee of The Red Cross (ICRC) states, South Sudan's treatment for depression and anxiety remains a vast gap. As the manager of the ICRC, Fiona Allan, says, "mental health is just as important as physical health, and more needs to be done to ensure that people have access to the care they need and that they don't face stigma for seeking health." There are more than 1,200 patients with symptoms linked to depression and anxiety, an indication of what many in South Sudan may suffer in silence despite their typical reactions to conflict and violence.

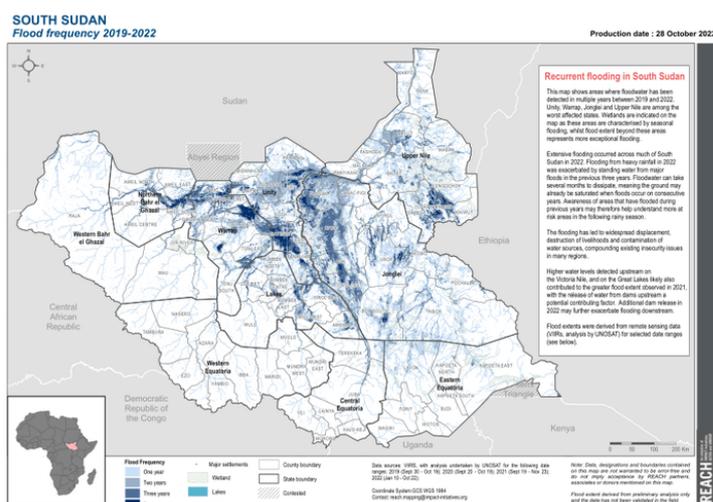
However, even with the help of different non-government organizations, the healthcare workers and the infrastructure are getting attacked in the form of physical assault, obstruction, violent searches, and related psychological threats and intimidation. Most of the incidents were by military personnel involving raids and incursions. Last year, the World Health Organization witnessed, 4 deaths and 38 injuries of healthcare workers and patients.

### *Food Insecurity*

South Sudan is currently witnessing "the worst hunger crisis to date," with an estimated 8.3 million people in South Sudan will face extreme hunger in the coming months. Hunger and malnutrition are on the rise due to the flood, drought, and conflict-affected areas of South Sudan, with some communities likely to face starvation if humanitarian assistance is not sustained and climate adaptation measures aren't scaled-up. According to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), about two-thirds of the South Sudanese population will likely face acute food insecurity during April-July 2023, while 1.4 million children will be malnourished.

In the past conflict of 2013-2016, the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) stated that the proportion of people facing high food insecurity and malnourishment levels was at the highest. The decline in food security and the high prevalence of malnutrition are linked to extreme climate events, poor macroeconomic conditions, and spiraling costs of food and fuel. There are several reasons why 75 percent of the population is currently facing food insecurity.

In 2022, the country's unprecedented, multi-year flood already exacerbated high hunger levels, ongoing conflict, and the global food crisis. The flooding was the worst one South Sudan has ever faced in decades. Four consecutive years of record-breaking rains and floods have left



As a

### *Flood Frequency during 2019-2022*

worrying increase in rates of moderate to severe acute malnutrition. Overflowing rivers have flooded thousands of hectares of farmland in eight states and prevented people from cultivating. Not only the people lost their food, but South Sudan also lost nearly 800,000 livestock due to diseases caused by animals grazing in flooded fields. There is good news about marginal improvements in food security across some parts of the country, but the nutrition crisis is still deepening. All states except one are showing a deterioration in their nutrition situation.

The impact of the climate crisis and ongoing conflict has led to livelihood losses, the destruction of arable land and crops, and rising food prices, threatening the survival of communities living in some of the most isolated states. Flooding contributed to South Sudan's food insecurity, and severe climate events have led to a large-scale displacement of crops and land. South Sudan forms part of a 'ring of fire' encircling the globe where climate shocks, conflict, and rising costs drive millions closer to starvation. Due to the 'ring of fire,' countries circling, it also is teetering on the edge of famine with an overall global need for humanitarian assistance.

## International Actions

*United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)*

people without food or land to cultivate. There are even damaged shelters and schools destroyed crops and household goods and reduced access to safe water, and hindered humanitarian access. In addition, more than 900,000 people were impacted. In the past years, communities prepared themselves for the rainy season by building dikes, but in 2022, there wasn't enough preparation to hold back the water.

result of the catastrophe, humanitarian organizations report witnessing a

The United Nations Security Council determined that the situation faced by South Sudan continued to constitute a threat to international peace and security in the region and established the United Nations Mission in South Sudan to consolidate peace and security and to help establish conditions for development. The mission's primary purpose is to monitor, investigate, verify, and report on violations and abuses of international human rights law and violations of international humanitarian law in South Sudan.



UNMISS works to provide stability to ensure the peace

process can move forward. This is critical to address the needs of the

*UN Peacekeepers keeping a lookout for the citizens*

humanitarian crises due to flooding, food crisis, and insecurity. The United Nations mission has played an essential role in promoting political stability in South Sudan. Almost 20,000 peacekeepers serving with the UNMISS to distribute food, water, and shelter, protect civilians, and build durable peace across the conflict-affected country. Peacekeepers are responsible for maintaining safety and security. They actively patrol communities across the country to deter violence and provide a protective presence with a particular focus on areas that displaced people are returning to in the wake of the peace deal. Another critical activity is to prevent sexual and gender-based violence where possible and support efforts to prevent, mitigate, and resolve inter-communal conflicts. The UNMISS also ensures that humanitarian aid, such as food, clean water, shelter, and healthcare, reaches millions of people in need across South Sudan. In addition, they helped organize consultations and training courses on gender-based and sexual violence and began HIV/AIDS capacity building, offering workshops and counseling to increase awareness.

#### *World Food Programme (WFP)*

With South Sudan currently in severe food insecurity, the WFP emergency operations in South Sudan help people affected by the lack of food and malnutrition. WFP is prioritizing its limited food assistance to reach 4.5 million people struggling with severe hunger across 52 counties in South Sudan, including 87,000 people in another eight counties. WFP ensures that vulnerable people affected by conflict, displacement, climate shocks, and economic rises can meet their food and nutrition needs. This includes conditional or unconditional food distributions and, where possible, cash transfers. The organization provides specialized nutritious food and nutrition counseling to pregnant and breastfeeding women and children. The nutrition program treats malnutrition among pregnant or breastfeeding women and children under five and prevents malnutrition for pregnant or breastfeeding women and children under 2. The organization joins with UNICEF and other partners to ensure nutrition programs reach even the most inaccessible parts of the country.

Not only does the organization provide nutritious foods, but WFP also works with smallholder farmers and farmers' organizations to improve resilience to shocks through training and the creation of assets to boost agricultural productivity and post-harvest management, improve access to essential services and markets, and help communities adapt to climate change. The organization has also introduced livelihood initiatives and supported communal farming land. This work helps reduce conflict and contributes to peace among communities.

## The Stances of the P5 Nations

### *United States of America*

The United States of America (USA) government is the leading international donor to South Sudan, providing lifesaving humanitarian assistance such as food, nutrition, protection, clean water, and sanitation, as well as essential services such as sanitation interventions, health care, and education to millions of South Sudanese citizens displaced or otherwise affected since the



*4,000 U.S. Peacekeepers stationed for South Sudan after a recent outbreak of violence*

start of the crisis in 2013. The government also supports civil society and independent media to ensure that diverse voices are heard and supports activities in conflict mitigation, trauma awareness, and reconciliation. Not only the government works solo to help South Sudan, but the United States collaborates

with multiple United Nations agencies, other donors, and nongovernmental organizations to

assist those affected by ongoing violence. However, in the past year, the United States laments the failure of South Sudanese leaders to implement the commitments to bring peace to their country and has ended U.S. assistance for peace process monitoring mechanisms for providing U.S. peacekeepers who contribute to security and stability through a range of activities and operations.

### *United Kingdom*

Next to the USA, the United Kingdom (UK) government is the second-largest donor to South Sudan; the Department for International Development has funded lifesaving health, education, and nutrition projects across the country. UK diplomacy continues to pressure regional governments to engage fully in peace. As a part of the UNMISS, 600 UK personnel are currently deployed in UN peacekeeping operations. The UK troops are the most prominent presence in South Sudan has 400 soldiers, including 41 women, deployed mainly in support of the county of the Government and the South Sudanese people. This makes the United Kingdom the sixth most significant contributor of assistance to UN peacekeepers for engineering supports as well as a field of hospital for care temporarily.

*France*

France Embassy mainly assists in South Sudan's crisis by contributing 1.2 million euros to provide nutrition assistance to thousands of people in South Sudan, where more than 7.74 million people are increasingly hungry after years of conflict, the impact of climate shocks such as flooding, and economic crisis. Not only that, but the contribution from France will also help WFP assist nearly 70,000 refugees who have fled the conflict. Marc Trouyet, A ambassador of France, says, "After providing the WFP with funding of 1.15 million euros in 2021, France is glad to participate again this year in the WFP's nutrition assistance operations, essential to the survival of the South Sudanese population".



*WFP Food Assistance Sponsored by France.*

*China*

Long before the civil war of 2013 to 2022, Sudan had a long economic relationship with China dominated by oil. Since a decade ago, Sudan has been China's 6<sup>th</sup> largest foreign oil source, supplying 5.5% of its needs. That position fell sharply when South Sudan seceded and took 80% of the once-united country's oil resources. Sudan's star does not shine as brightly for China as a resource for oil as it once did. There are statements that China is still in a healthy relationship with Sudan but seems to be in the wrong position with South Sudan. UN reports confirming that Chinese peacekeepers abandoned posts in South Sudan in July 2016. In addition, China technically dominates South Sudan's oil as even "before South Sudan became independent in 2011, China had a monopoly on the oil sector in Sudan," states Dr. David H. Shinn, a former American ambassador. Unfortunately, this monopoly continued in independent South Sudan.

*Russian Federation*

Not much is mentioned regarding the stance of the Russian Federation toward South Sudan, as it could be seen that Russia, along with the USA, is providing humanitarian and peacekeeping operations. However, during a 2017 U.N. Security Council meeting, Russia's Deputy U.N. Ambassador stated that any more actions toward South Sudan are counterproductive to impose such measures as these measures will not help to break this deadlock and will only further exacerbate the crisis. While the United States of America pushes the U.N Security Council to take further action against South Sudan, Russia will most likely resist by veto power.

**Possible Solutions**

*Consulting the International Criminal Court.*

The International Criminal Court is a permanent international court established to investigate, prosecute and try individuals accused of committing the most serious crimes of concern to the



international community as a whole. The main problems raised by South Sudan is mainly their political problems leading to several small-scale wars between ethnic clans or extreme violence toward women or girls. With serious conflicts, the International Criminal Court could investigate and decide a reasonable judgment for President Salva Kiir and vice president Riek Machar for their sins in creating a violent environment for citizens. Not only could an

#### *Parliaments gathered in the International Criminal Court*

investigation be conducted but also discuss with all the Non-government organizations (NGOS) that have contributed to creating a better South Sudan despite the little effort the two presidents put into creating peace in their lands on. At the end, with the International Criminal Court and help from the International Court of Justice, a new international treaty should be created for both presidents to agree on.

#### *Enhancing Security Measures and Humanitarian Aids.*

South Sudan could see enhancing more protection and increasing humanitarian aid. Although UK and USA peacekeeper troops are there in South Sudan, providing steady protection and preventing the citizens from danger, even with enough troops, the rate of violence doesn't seem to decrease. So, the question is, will there any solutions expect for peacekeepers, or are there not enough? At this rate, the pathway for gang fights only to increase and small ethnic groups to continue with their feuds. Enhanced security measures could mean an invitation to the international community for more peacekeepers or in methods that don't even need peacekeepers but other peaceful methods to keep the people of South Sudan no longer from danger due to their own violations. In addition, even though NGOs are helping out with food insecurity and health products, people doesn't seem to be showing progress in their nutritional values. Delegates could draft an emergency plan for temporary hospitals or temporary food facilities.

## **Glossary**

*Coup*: a sudden, violent, and unlawful seizure of power from a government

*Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS)*: Most significant agreement that involved substantial pressure to put on the main parties of the South Sudan conflict into peace.

*Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC):* an innovative multi-stakeholder initiative to improve analysis and decision-making on food security.

*Ring of Fire:* a path along the Pacific Ocean characterized by active volcanoes and frequent earthquakes.

*Peacekeepers:* someone who helps to prevent or stop fighting between countries or groups

*UNICEF:* Abbreviated from the United Nations Children's Fund, UNICEF supports child health and nutrition, safe water and sanitation, quality education and skill building, HIV prevention and treatment for mothers and babies, and the protection of children and adolescents from violence and exploitation.

*International Committee of The Red Cross (ICRC):* Since 1863, the International Committee of the Red Cross has been to protect and assist victims of armed conflict and promote understanding and respect for international humanitarian law.

*Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission:* The reconstituted joint monitoring and evaluation commission is constituted under Chapter VII of the R-ARCSS and is responsible for monitoring and overseeing the implementation of the Revitalized Peace Agreement and the mandate and tasks of the RTGoNU (Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity), including the adherence to the Parties to the agreed timelines and implementation schedule.

*Security Arrangements Monitoring and Verification Mechanism:* The full name of The Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring and Verification Mechanism is to monitor, verify compliance and report to the IGAD (Intergovernmental Authority on Development).

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