

Forum: General Assembly Three**Issue: Addressing ethnic conflict in South Sudan****Student officer: Elaine Lu****Position: Chair**

Introduction

The ethnic conflict in South Sudan has a long history among South Sudan's varied ethnic groups. South Sudan has 64 tribes with the largest being the Dinkas, who constitute about 35% of the population and predominate in government. The second largest are the Nuers. Conflict is often aggravated among nomadic groups over the issue of cattle and grazing land and is part of the wider Sudanese nomadic conflicts. The conflict which started as a political dispute in December 2013, took ethnic undertones with civilians being targeted on the basis of ethnicity and perceived political allegiance. Nearly 400,000 people have died, South Sudan's social fabric has been torn, infrastructure destroyed, and survivors left with mental health scars. The civil war has formally ended, but in 2020 there was an increase in both intercommunal and politically motivated conflicts. Ethnic cleansing is taking place in war-torn South Sudan, the country's UN human rights commission has warned. It says it has observed starvation, the burning of villages and rape being used as weapons of war across the country.



Figure #1: Distribution of ethnic groups in South Sudan

This report will probe the history, causes, and impacts of the ethnic conflict in South Sudan. Although there are international actions taken to help to combat this issue, but it is still a long-lasting problem within the area of South Sudan. It is vitally important for delegates execute more regulation for more changes to resolve the situation and bring the world to the next step.

Key Terminology

Ethnic conflict

Ethnic conflict is when at least one side defines their goals in terms of their ethnicity and when the conflict, its causes, and potential resolutions are viewed from an ethnic perspective. Conflicts typically arise over political, economic, social, cultural, or geographical issues rather than actual ethnic divisions.

Ethnicity

Ethnicity refers to adhering to the habits, beliefs, and language of a specific racial, national, or cultural group and identifying as a member of that group.

Political allegiance

Political allegiance refers to the loyalty of a citizen to their government or of a subject to their sovereign.

Human rights

Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, or any other status.

Intercommunal conflicts

Intercommunal conflicts are defined as conflict between rival factions within a state that may result from disagreements over who has access to limited resources or political authority.

Background

Sudanese Independence and Civil War

Despite his campaign vows to merge the Sudan with Egypt, Azharī eventually renounced his commitments because to the war in the southern Sudan and the obligations that come with governmental authority and power. He proclaimed Sudan to be an independent republic with an elected representative parliament on January 1, 1956. The fledgling democracy of the Republic of the Sudan did not last long. At first, parliamentary rule was revered as the embodiment of independence and nationalism. However, Sudanese political parties were loose alliances driven mostly by self-interest and allegiance to different religious factions rather than well-organized organizations with clear objectives. The parliament degenerated once party management strategies were exhausted, helping only those lawmakers who enjoyed the benefits of patronage and authority. On the night of November 16–17, 1958, disillusionment with the existing system led to a bloodless coup headed by the Sudanese army's commander in chief, Gen. Ibrāhīm 'Abbūd.



Figure #2: First Sudanese Civil War

1965 saw elections for a representative government in April and May. However, the parliamentary administration continued to be plagued by factional conflicts and was unable to address Sudan's numerous issues. Furthermore, the transitional government's previous aspirations for collaboration with the southerners quickly faded, and there was little chance that the dispute in the south would be resolved. Col. Gaafar Mohamed el-Nimeiri masterminded another coup on May 25, 1969, as a result of discontent with the current regime. Challenges to the authority of his rule also included a communist-led coup in July 1971. Despite the fact that the coup fell apart after three days, Nimeiri was greatly impacted by it and was motivated to push for an end to the southern uprising.

The 1972 Addis Ababa Agreement

In the meantime, the rebels in southern Sudan had regrouped. Formerly made up of multiple autonomous commands, they were unified in 1971 under the leadership of General Joseph Lagu, who also oversaw the Anya Nya's political arm, the Southern Sudan Liberation Movement (SSLM), as well as its combat forces. After that, the SSLM, speaking on behalf of General Lagu, continued to communicate with the Sudanese government about suggestions for regional autonomy and the cessation of hostilities until 1971. After 17 years of fighting between southern insurgents and the Sudanese army, the Addis Ababa Agreement was signed on February 27, 1972, marking the beginning of the southern region's autonomy. The Anya Nya soldiers would be included into the Sudanese army and police, while the region's affairs would be overseen by a distinct legislative and administrative body.

South Sudanese Civil War

On July 9, 2011, ten years ago, South Sudan successfully battled for independence from Sudan. Since then, the newly formed nation has been plunged into a brutal seven-year civil war; despite the signing of a peace agreement by the parties in 2018, intercommunal violence and violations of human rights by the government continue. This set the stage for the catastrophic hunger that is currently engulfing millions of people.

A civil war destroyed the aspirations and objectives of the newly formed nation in December 2013. The Sudan People's Liberation Army-in Opposition (SPLA-IO), an armed

opposition group commanded by current first vice president Riek Machar, and other armed groups and linked militias engaged in combat with President Salva Kiir's government forces. Related violence has decreased since members of the parties that were at battle before the new government took office. But because of the delays in its execution, the peace agreement is under jeopardy. It is also said to have ignored the war's underlying causes, which included animosities between the nation's leaders.

However, rivalry for land, cattle, and pasture, as well as lingering grievances from the conflict, have led to a resurgence in intercommunal violence, which has killed or displaced hundreds of thousands of people. Leaders in the armed forces and politics have escalated the bloodshed by arming communities. Furthermore, there have been numerous attacks on civilian populations in the Central Equatoria war by government forces and the armed opposition group, National Salvation Front.



Figure #3: South Sudanese Civil War in 2013

The state of human rights is still extremely dire. There is now less room for citizens to challenge the status quo or get involved in political matters. Authorities have taken action to quiet the press and media rather than viewing them as allies in the construction of the new country. During the civil war, security forces targeted, jailed, surveilled, and coerced journalists and activists to self-censor. This crackdown is still going on now.

Major Parties Involved

United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC)

The United Nations Human Rights Council (UN HRC) is an intergovernmental body within the United Nations system that is responsible for promoting and protecting human rights around the world. In 2023, UNHCR will continue to provide support to host countries to uphold the quality of asylum for South Sudanese refugees in the region, with keen attention provided to women and children, who make up the majority of refugees

United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)

The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) is a peacekeeping mission established by the United Nations Security Council in 2011 to support the new government, protect civilians, monitor and investigate human rights violations, support humanitarian assistance, and promote the implementation of the peace agreement. The mission was established in response to the ongoing conflict in South Sudan, which has a long history of ethnic violence among its varied ethnic groups.

United States of America

The United States provides \$1 billion annually in humanitarian and development assistance and peacekeeping support to South Sudan. In order to guarantee that a variety of viewpoints are heard, the U.S. Government also supports civil society and independent media. It also backs initiatives aimed at reducing conflict, raising trauma awareness, and promoting reconciliation. It will take resolving conflicts and resolving underlying grievances, bolstering fundamental institutions and enhancing governance transparency procedures to make them more inclusive, combating corruption, and meeting the populace's demands for better livelihoods and basic services to bring South Sudan back to stability.

China

China has sent multiple batches of medical supplies, antimalarial medication, emergency humanitarian supplies, and human resource training to South Sudan; these contributions have significantly helped the country's infrastructure as well as the livelihood and general well-being of its citizens.

Canada

Canada has been contributing to the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), through uniformed peacekeepers (CAF) and via assessed contributions to peacekeeping missions annually since 2011, to consolidate peace and security and help establish conditions for development. Since 2016, more than \$21 million has been allocated by the Peace and Stabilization Operations Program to South Sudan's conflict prevention and peacebuilding initiatives. Canada also backs community-based initiatives in the disputed Abyei Administrative Area to avert conflict.

Timeline of Events

Date	Description/Note
1805	Egyptian conquest and British colonization of present-day Sudan and South Sudan, establishing inequalities between the Arab north and Black African South.
1947-1956	Unification and independence. Due to the prior agreement between the two nations, the Egyptian Revolution not only ended British rule over Egypt but also resulted in Sudan's independence from both Britain and Egypt. This agreement was reached in October, 1954, and took effect on January 1, 1956.
1955-1972	The First Sudanese Civil War. The conflict lasted for 17 years, until an agreement signed in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, led to the creation of the Southern Sudan Autonomous Region (SSAR).
1983-2005	The Second Sudanese Civil War. In 1983, Sudanese president Gaafar Nimeiry declared the country an Islamic state and revoked the autonomy of the majority-Christian SSAR. The Second Sudanese Civil War broke out in response to this, although the southern coalition was split into more factions this time, largely dividing along ethnic lines. At 22 years, it was the longest civil war in African history.
April, 2010	Independence. In April of 2010, with 93% of the vote, Kiir was re-elected president of Southern Sudan. After nearly a month, and with an even more overwhelming majority of 98%, South Sudanese nationals voted to separate

	from Sudan. South Sudan was first recognized as an independent nation on July 9, 2011, making it the 54th country in Africa and the 193rd country to join the United Nations.
July 8, 2011	UNMISS established on 8 July 2011 by United Nations Security Council Resolution 1996.
July, 2013	Outbreak of the South Sudanese Civil War. Following several months of relative peace, combat broke out between soldiers loyal to Machar and government forces in December 2013, sparking violence. Amid threats of sanctions, President Kiir signed a new peace deal with Machar in August, 2015.
2018-Today	As violence continues despite peace, an uncertain future.

Previous Attempts/Solutions

South Sudan has been plagued by ethnic conflict for decades. The conflict is rooted in a complex web of historical, political, and economic factors. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) of 2005, which ended the Second Sudanese Civil War, paved the way for South Sudan's independence in 2011. However, the country has been mired in conflict since then. There have been several attempts to resolve the ethnic conflict in South Sudan. One such attempt was made by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), which comprises leaders from Eritrea, Ethiopia, Uganda, and Kenya. The IGAD peace initiative began in 1993 and has had mixed results.

The UN has been working to promote peace and stability in the country through various initiatives and programs. The UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) was established in 2011 to help consolidate peace and security and protect civilians. The UN has also been involved in mediating peace talks between the warring parties in South Sudan. In 2018, the Revitalized Agreement between the key players in South Sudan's long-running civil war provided a framework for peace. Since then, the UN has been working with the South Sudanese government and other stakeholders to implement the agreement and promote reconciliation.

In addition, the UN has launched several initiatives to address the humanitarian crisis caused by the conflict. For example, UNHCR recently launched an inter-agency funding appeal for \$470.4 million to support over one million people, including refugees, returnees, and third-country nationals, affected by the Sudan crisis. The UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2023-2025 is another initiative that aims to address national priorities and advance on the bright future planned for tomorrow.

Potential Solutions

Suggests promoting sustained dialogue between local governance institutions and local community leaders, including traditional leaders and community-based organizations. This will provide an opportunity for the elimination of some inefficient structures of the past and to adopt modern institutions and mechanisms of conflict resolution. Improving budgetary transparency and disclosure of public information will enhance accountability in public administration. Enhancing the capacity of oversight institutions would go a long way in improving the management of public resources-based conflicts.

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