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Compound fractures

Political formations, armed groups and regional mediation in South Sudan

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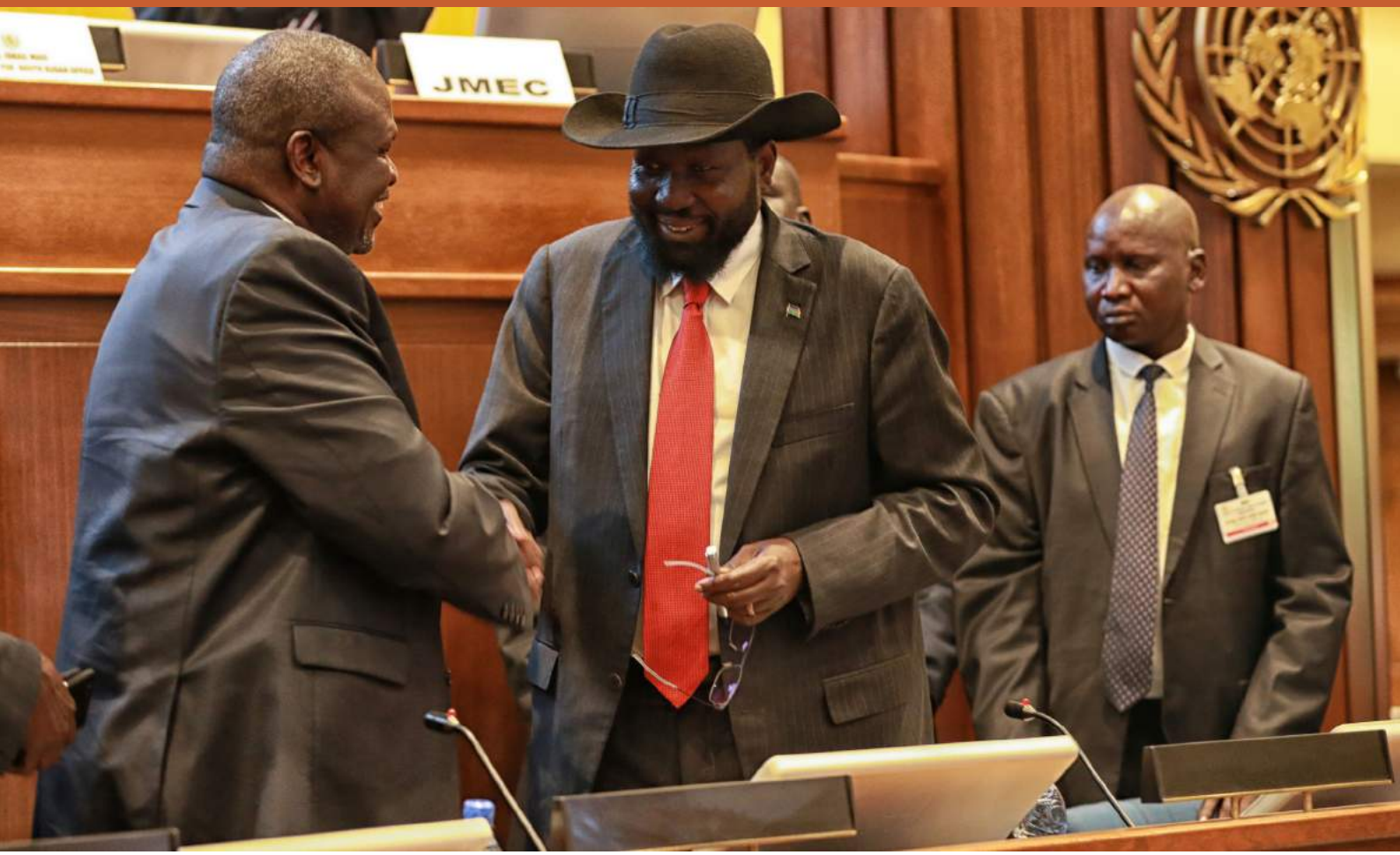


In September 2018 the warring parties in South Sudan signed the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS). The R-ARCSS will be implemented in a daunting environment – over the course of the five-year conflict, political and security arenas have grown increasingly fractured. For the agreement to succeed, political and military leaders must convince the population of South Sudan and the broader international community that they are committed to transforming the way politics is done.

Key findings

- In September 2018 the warring parties in South Sudan signed the R-ARCSS. But the R-ARCSS will be implemented in a challenging environment, as the country's political and security arenas have grown increasingly fractured and incoherent.
- Military offensives by government forces have given them an advantage on the battlefield. In the process, the government has alienated sizeable portions of the population and lost the confidence of key allies in the international community.
- Driven by the spread of the conflict, dwindling government revenues and the prospect of being rewarded with a share of power through the peace process, various armed opposition groups have emerged in recent years. These groups are mostly led by disgruntled politicians and military officers who have either been pushed out of the government or SPLM-IO or defected owing to dissatisfaction with the leadership.
- Although IGAD was ultimately successful in brokering an agreement among the parties, the mediation has struggled with major challenges throughout the conflict, including the zero-sum thinking of the warring parties, which remain committed to military solutions and unwilling to compromise, and the manner in which regional leaders have asserted their bilateral interests.

Recommendations

- Use R-ARCSS institutions to build trust among leadership, as the ability of parties to reach consensus and speak with a united voice will be an important early test of their ability to work together in the Revitalized TGONU (R-TGONU).
- Regional and international actors should continue to engage with opposition leaders who did not sign the R-ARCSS and encourage signatories to the agreement to look for ways to bring the non-signatories into the fold. In addition, there is a need to maintain pressure on the South Sudanese leadership to implement the R-ARCSS, and impose punitive measures on parties that violate the agreement.
- Support constructive engagement by IGAD member states while preventing the imposition of bilateral interests. Moving forward, the AU could play a robust oversight role in the implementation of the R-ARCSS to moderate any regional interference in the process.
- Support civic actors to participate effectively in institutions that are established under the R-ARCSS and to serve as a bridge between the peace process and the South Sudanese people. There is also an urgent need to raise awareness of the peace agreement, as the more South Sudanese feel a sense of ownership of the R-ARCSS, the greater the political costs for parties that seek to violate it.
- Ensure that the requirements in the R-ARCSS to appoint a minimum number of women to leadership positions are adhered to.

Overview

On 31 October 2018 officials from the government of South Sudan, opposition groups, regional heads of state and other dignitaries converged in Juba to celebrate the recent signing of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS). The R-ARCSS was the product of nine months of negotiations under the auspices of a mediation effort led by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). Twelve of the 15 armed and political groups participating in the mediation signed the agreement, along with other stakeholders that included faith leaders, civil society members, women's leaders, youth leaders and business leaders.[1]

During his speech at the peace celebration, Dr Riek Machar, leader of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in-Opposition (SPLM-IO), said half-jokingly that it had not been easy for him to decide to come to Juba, since the last time he came it was very, very difficult to leave. Machar's comment alluded to his flight on foot from South Sudan through the Democratic Republic of Congo after fighting broke out between the rival forces for a second time in Juba in July 2016. Over the months that followed, the violence spread to previously stable parts of Greater Equatoria and Greater Bahr-el-Ghazal, armed opposition groups began to proliferate, and the political and security arenas grew increasingly fractured and incoherent. By February 2017 a conflict-induced famine was declared in two counties in southern Unity and a previous agreement signed in August 2015 lay in disarray.

The R-ARCSS seeks to address the changing nature of the conflict by expanding the power-sharing arrangements to include the new opposition groups that have emerged since the signing of the last peace agreement in August 2015, along with other changes to governance and security arrangements.[2] In his speech at the peace celebration, President Salva Kiir distinguished the R-ARCSS from the previous agreement in four ways:

> First, all the parties to the conflict have realized that they could not meet their political objectives through violence and so peaceful resolution became the only option for all the parties. Second, the mediation was impartial, more focused, and understood the issues that the parties were wrestling with and so they provided various realistic options and there was a sustained effort to bridge the gaps, unlike the previous rounds of negotiations. Third, the parties were not coerced into signing this Agreement; each party signed on its own volition. Lastly, some of the provisions of the last Agreement were inherently intended to divide the country such as the creation of co-presidency and two separate armies in one country. In this Agreement, such problematic provisions have been altered appropriately and amicably.[3]

Whether the previous agreement differed substantively in the manner which Kiir described may be subject to diverging viewpoints, as may the degree of coercion that was exercised by Sudan and Uganda in getting the parties to sign the R-ARCSS, but the presence of government and opposition leaders together on stage in Juba so soon after the peace agreement was signed speaks to a certain level of political will that has been lacking in the past. The newfound cooperation between Sudan and Uganda, while potentially raising concerns about their longer-term motives for asserting themselves so strongly in the peace process, is also reason to be cautiously optimistic about the R-ARCSS in the short term.

> The R-ARCSS seeks to address the changing nature of the conflict by expanding power-sharing arrangements

The next few months will be critical in determining whether the R-ARCSS can create space for a peaceful resolution of the conflict, or whether it will collapse like past agreements. At the time of writing, troubling reports of violence continue to emerge from various parts of the country, although fighting appears to have decreased with the signing of the agreement.[4] Critical decision points in the months ahead include a determination on the number of states, which is supposed to be made by an Independent Boundaries Committee (IBC), the separation, assembly and cantonment of government and opposition forces, and the establishment of a new transitional government in May 2019. Success will require a spirit of compromise among the warring parties, and decisive and unbiased action by the region against parties that violate the agreement.

This report gives an overview of the main political and security actors in South Sudan to inform policy options moving forward. Research was conducted through a literature review and a series of interviews with officials in the government of South Sudan, members of political and armed opposition groups, academics, faith leaders, civil society members, regional policymakers, diplomats and international experts, in both Juba and the wider region, between June and August 2018.[5] The first section traces the evolution of the conflict since December 2013, the second provides an overview of the main armed groups and political formations in the country, the third focuses on the IGAD mediation, and the conclusion offers a series of recommendations to inform IGAD, the African Union (AU), the United Nations (UN) and other policymakers as they work to promote a sustainable solution to the crisis.

Context

In September 2018 the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine published a study estimating that 382 000 people – or approximately 3% of the entire population of South Sudan – have died as a result of the conflict.[6] The statistic provides further evidence of the devastating toll that the conflict, now approaching the end of its fifth year, is taking on South Sudanese society. The subsections below provide additional information on the historical factors that contributed to the outbreak of conflict in December 2013, the current humanitarian and economic context, regional efforts to secure peace, and several parallel peace initiatives.

Seeds of the conflict

Longstanding and politicised divisions in the security sector contributed to the outbreak of conflict in 2013.[7] Many of these divisions date back to the previous 22-year civil war that came to an end with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the Sudan People's Liberation Movement and Army (SPLM/A) and the government of Sudan in 2005.[8] The CPA gave southern Sudan regional autonomy and a share of national wealth and power. After a six-year interim period, southern Sudanese were to vote in a referendum on self-determination to decide whether to remain united with Sudan or to secede and form an independent country in the south. After an overwhelming majority of voters opted for secession, South Sudan declared its independence on 9 July 2011.[9]

Southern Sudan experienced dramatic growth during the interim period. Between 2005 and 2011, annual revenue increased from a meagre US$100 000 to US$3.4 billion as the newly created government of southern Sudan gained access to a share of national oil revenues.[10] The SPLM used part of this windfall to buy peace from opposing armed groups, such as the South Sudan Defence Forces (SSDF), which had been fighting alongside Khartoum during the war. The armed groups were offered amnesty and incorporated into the SPLA with inflated ranks and separate command and control structures, causing the military to grow from approximately 40 000 troops in 2005 to 240 000 SPLA troops and an additional 90 000 organised forces (including police and wildlife services) in 2011.[11] Prior to the outbreak of violence in December 2013, the SPLA had 745 generals – 40 more than the United States (US) and second only to Russia – and the security sector accounted for some 60% of the official budget.[12]

> 382 000 people – or approximately 3% of the entire population of South Sudan – have died as a result of the conflict

Despite provision for a national reconciliation process in the CPA, the government of southern Sudan never embarked on any such initiative for fear that it would cause old grievances to resurface and endanger the referendum on self-determination. In 2013, with South Sudan's independence already achieved, several prominent politicians, including Machar, Pagan Amum and Rebecca Nyandeng, voiced their ambitions to contest the chairpersonship of the SPLM in the upcoming National Liberation Conference. Kiir responded by firing several state governors who were seen to be supporting his political opponents, stripping then vice-president Machar of his powers, and dismissing the entire cabinet. The ensuing political dispute was too much for the military to bear and it fractured along the fault lines that had been set during the last civil war, plunging the country into a protracted conflict that persists to this day. As a South Sudanese academic interviewed for this study remarked: 'The 22-year war had actually never stopped.

What happened in 2013 took the crisis to another level, but it was always there.'[13]

Humanitarian and economic crises

The war in South Sudan has displaced 4.2 million people, with 1.7 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) and 2.5 million refugees.[14] Up to 2.4 million children are not receiving an education, the highest proportion of children out of school in the world.[15]

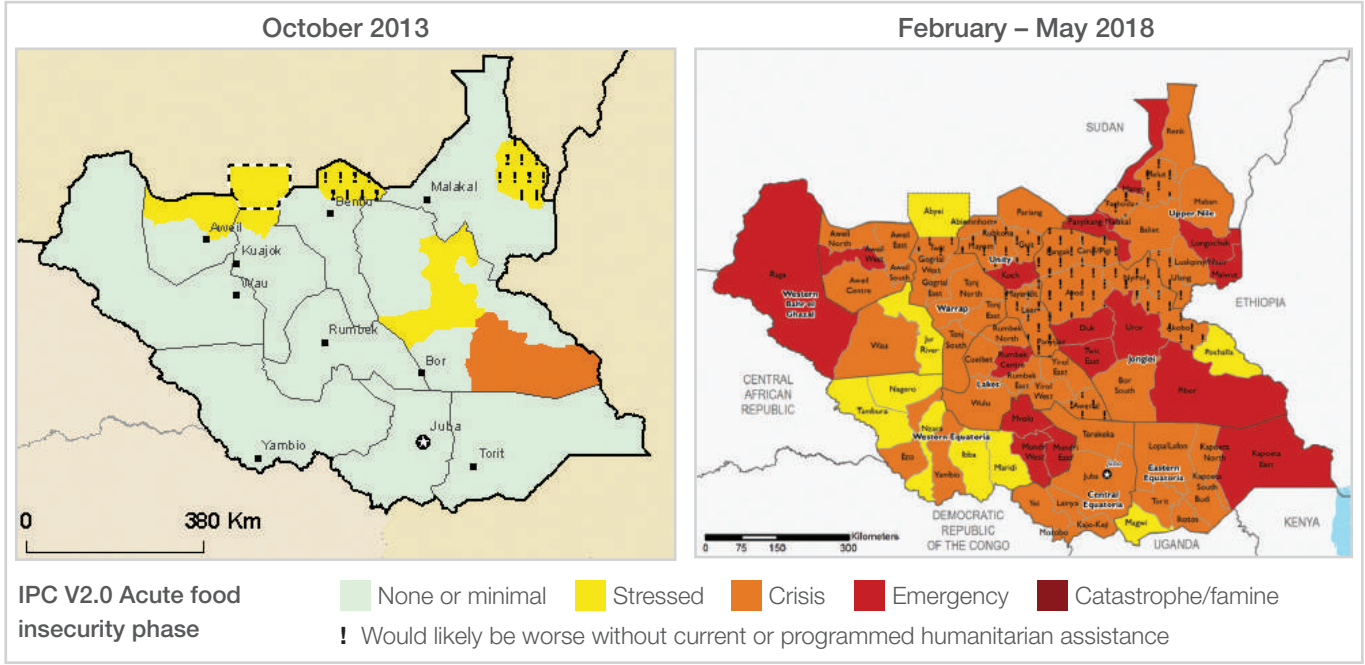
> Longstanding and politicised divisions in the security sector contributed to the outbreak of conflict in 2013

The economy is among the casualties of the war. Oil production fell to approximately 120 000 barrels per day in 2016/17 from a peak of 350 000 barrels per day in 2011, and annual inflation peaked at over 800% in October 2016, before easing somewhat in subsequent years.[16] The government is thought to be financing itself through the advance sale of oil, and by December 2016 public debt amounted to about US$1.4 billion, while foreign exchange reserves had dwindled to about US$70 million (or two weeks' worth of imports).[17] If and when peace is secured, some experts have estimated that the transitional government could cost at least US$400 million in its first year, excluding any costs associated with security sector reform. Even with the resumption of oil sales, it is unlikely that South Sudan would be able to generate this amount of revenue without a considerable input of funds from the international community.

Regional mediation

A few weeks into the fighting, IGAD launched a mediation process in an effort to contain the situation.[19] The peace talks dragged on for 20 months before the negotiating parties – at that time limited to the government, SPLM-IO, Former Detainees (FDs) and other political parties – agreed to the terms of a political settlement in August 2015.[20] The Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (ARCSS) set out the terms of a power-sharing government that would be responsible for implementing an ambitious post-conflict recovery and reform programme over the course of a 30-month transitional period.[21] The ARCSS encountered obstacles from the outset, when the government published a list of 12 reservations to the agreement.[22] In October 2015 Kiir

Figure 1: Maps showing deterioration in food security as a result of the conflict*



* Maps depicting deterioration in food security in South Sudan as a result of the December 2013 crisis. The relatively low levels of food insecurity before the crisis were one of the development success stories of the post-CPA and post-independence period.[18]

issued a decree that increased the number of states from 10 to 28 (with a subsequent increase to 32).[23] This further undermined the agreement by throwing the state-level power-sharing ratios into disarray, and placing most of the oil-producing areas in states controlled by government-aligned forces.

Machar returned to Juba in April 2016, but the implementation of the ARCSS continued to lag behind schedule.[24] The parties failed to demilitarise Juba as required by the agreement and the two opposing forces were left in close proximity throughout this period. In July 2016 violence broke out in Juba for a second time, causing Machar to flee across the Congolese border, eventually being placed under house arrest in South Africa at South Sudan's request.[25] For the rest of 2016 and well into 2017, conflict intensified across South Sudan as the war entered a new and dangerous phase. Whereas the violence in the first part of the war had been mostly contained to the Greater Upper Nile region, the fighting now spread across much of Greater Equatoria and parts of Greater Bahr-el-Ghazal as government forces sought to decisively defeat SPLM-IO and allied groups throughout the country. In the months that followed, some 1 million refugees streamed into Uganda alone and a war-induced famine was declared in Leer and Mayendit counties in Southern Liech State (formerly Unity State).[26]

> Machar returned to Juba in April 2016, but the implementation of the ARCSS continued to lag behind schedule

Despite the apparent violations of the ARCSS, IGAD member states, with the support of the Troika (the US, United Kingdom [UK] and Norway), AU and European Union (EU), endorsed the effective detention of Machar in South Africa and the installation of his former deputy, Taban Deng Gai, as First Vice-President representing the SPLM-IO in the transitional government.[27] The chair of the body established to oversee implementation of the ARCSS, former Botswana president Festus Mogae, articulated the consensus viewpoint when he said that diplomats 'don't have an option' and that Deng Gai's appointment 'adds weight to efforts to realize peace'.[28] Emboldened by the apparent international support for their position, government forces embarked on military campaigns in pursuit of opposition forces.[29]

High-Level Revitalization Forum

In June 2017, amid growing tensions in the government's inner circle, IGAD renewed its diplomatic efforts and announced plans to hold a High-Level Revitalization Forum (HLRF) to restore implementation of the ARCSS. Pre-forum consultations were held from August to October 2017 and the first phase of the HLRF was launched in December 2017. After a few days of talks, the parties recommitted to the terms of a cessation of hostilities agreement and then proceeded to violate it hours after it had come into force.[30] Despite the ceasefire violations, the mediation proceeded with Phases II and III of the HLRF in Addis Ababa in February and May 2018, respectively. After Phase III concluded without an agreement, IGAD asked the regional governments in Khartoum, Kampala and Nairobi to facilitate face-to-face meetings between Kiir and Machar to help resolve the outstanding issues.[31]

The shifting of the peace talks to Khartoum in June 2018 raised concerns that the governments of Sudan and Uganda would use the process to advance their bilateral interests.[32] Such fears seemed to be confirmed when the June 2018 Khartoum Declaration called for increased cooperation between Sudan and South Sudan on rehabilitation of the oil sector, and the July 2018 Agreement on Outstanding Issues of Security Arrangements placed Sudan and Uganda in charge of the restructured monitoring and verification mechanism. Opposition parties began to complain about Sudanese national security officers' pressuring them to sign the agreements that were under negotiation.[33] In a *New York Times* op-ed written shortly after the agreement was signed, Ugandan scholar Mahmood Mamdani went so far as to say that 'South Sudan is on its way to becoming an informal protectorate of Sudan and Uganda'.[34]

Nonetheless, on 12 September 2018 the Transitional Government of National Unity (TGONU), SPLM-IO and all but three of the other negotiating parties participating in the HLRF signed the R-ARCSS.[35] The

agreement retains Kiir as the head of state, reinstates Machar as first vice-president, and provides for four other vice-presidential seats that are to be filled by nominees of the SPLM-IO, FDs and South Sudan Opposition Alliance (SSOA). The Parliament is expanded from 440 to 550 members to accommodate opposition groups, and the various armed groups operating in the country are to be integrated into a single unified force within eight months of the signing of the agreement. With regard to the dispute over the number of states, the R-ARCSS retains the 32-state system but calls for an IBC to be established to decide the number of states and their boundaries in the months leading up to the establishment of the new government.

> Among the strengths of the HLRF was the inclusivity of the process. The mediation went to considerable lengths to include independent and experienced civic voices

Given the manner in which the parties have routinely violated past agreements, many observers received the signing of the R-ARCSS with considerable scepticism. The Troika, for example, issued a statement at the signing of the agreement that read:

> The Troika is committed to peace in South Sudan. But in order to be convinced of the parties' commitment, we will need to see a significant change in their approach. This must include, but not be limited to: an end to violence and full humanitarian access; the release of political prisoners; and a real commitment to effective and accountable implementation, demonstrated by supporting robust security and enforcement mechanisms, checks on executive and majority power, and the transparent use of resources for the benefit of all South Sudanese. Without progress in these critical areas, we remain concerned the agreement will not deliver the peace that the people of South Sudan deserve.[36]

Despite some progress in areas such as the release of political prisoners and prisoners of war, the fact that fighting has persisted in various parts of the country has done little to allay these concerns.

Among the strengths of the HLRF was the inclusivity of the process. Not only were most of the key armed and political actors included, but the mediation also went to considerable lengths to include independent and experienced civic voices, including faith leaders, civil society members, women leaders, academics, refugees, IDPs, youth leaders and business leaders.[37] Civic actors participating in the HLRF made important contributions in terms of challenging the warring parties to prioritise the interests of the people of South Sudan over their own narrow personal ambitions, proposing alternatives to the power-sharing formulas that were being put forward, and trying to bridge the divide between the warring parties.[38]

PARLIAMENT IS EXPANDED FROM

440

TO

550

members

TO ACCOMMODATE OPPOSITION GROUPS

Table 1: List of parties to the HLRF*

The table is arranged in alphabetical order and does not reflect group standing.

		Name of group	Acronym	Leadership	Affiliation	Date founded	Areas of operation
ARMED GROUPS	1	Federal Democratic Party	FDP	Gabriel Changson	Opposition (SSOA)	Aug 2015	Fangak (military capacity unproven)
	2	National Democratic Movement	NDM	Lam Akol	Opposition (SSOA)	Sep 2016	Fashoda (military capacity unproven)
	3	National Salvation Front	NAS	Thomas Cirillo	Opposition (SSOA)	Mar 2017	Kapoeta, Imatong, Yei River
	4	South Sudan Liberation Movement	SSLM	Bapiny Montuil	Opposition (SSOA)	Oct 2016	Northern Liech (military capacity unproven)
	5	South Sudan National Movement for Change	SSNMC	Joseph Bakosoro	Opposition (SSOA)	Jan 2017	Amadi, Gbudwe, Maridi, Tambura, Yei River (military capacity unproven)
	6	South Sudan Patriotic Movement	SSPM**	Costello Garang, Abdel Bagi Ayii	Opposition (SSOA)	Apr 2017	Aweil East (military capacity unproven)
	7	South Sudan United Movement	SSUM**	Peter Gadet	Opposition (SSOA)	Jul 2017	Northern Liech
	8	Transitional Government of National Unity	TGONU	Salva Kiir	Government	–	Presence throughout the country except remaining opposition strongholds in Akobo and Southern Liech
	9	Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in-Opposition (RM)	SPLM-IO (RM)	Riek Machar	Opposition	Dec 2013	Presence throughout rural parts of Greater Upper Nile, Greater Equatoria (Yei River, Gbudwe, Maridi, Amadi, Kapoeta and Imatong) and Greater Bahr-el-Ghazal (Wau and Lol)
	10	United Democratic Republic Alliance	UDRA	Gatwech Koang Thich	Opposition (SSOA)	Feb 2017	Unknown (military capacity unproven)
POLITICAL FORMATIONS	11	National Agenda	–	Joseph Ukel Abango	Opposition (OPP)	–	–
	12	National Alliance	–	Kornelio Kon Ngu	Opposition (OPP)	–	–
	13	People's Democratic Movement	PDM	Hakim Dario	Opposition (SSOA)	–	–
	14	SPLM Leaders-Former Detainees	SPLM-FDs	Pagan Amum	Opposition (SSOA)	–	–
	15	Umbrella	–	Peter Mayen Majongdit	Opposition (OPP)	–	–

* The R-ARCSS defines 'parties' as the political and military actors participating in the negotiation, but this should not overshadow the important role played by civic actors, including civil society, women, academics, refugees, IDPs, youth, business community, faith-based groups, people with disabilities and traditional leaders, many of whom were also signatories to the agreement.

** The South Sudan Liberation Movement (SSLM) and South Sudan United Movement (SSUM) are resurrections of armed groups that fought against the SPLA in the 22-year war. The dates that are listed for their founding are taken from when B Monytuil and Gadet defected from the government and SPLM-IO, respectively.

Parallel processes

Over the years, parallel peace processes have been initiated alongside the IGAD mediation effort. The two most significant in this regard are the National Dialogue and the SPLM Reunification. Kiir launched the National Dialogue process by executive decree in December 2015.[39] The initiative has been mired in controversy from the start and has not succeeded in securing the participation of the SPLM-IO and other opposition groups, or in accessing most areas of opposition support. As a South Sudanese academic observed:

> The National Dialogue as it exists has no parameters. It's raising the last hopes of the people. If there's an agreement from Addis, you'll need to start a dialogue process from the beginning. It's a big problem. We've missed so many opportunities. The war could have brought people together. But we've turned against ourselves.[40]

Proponents of the process maintain that participants are having candid and critical discussions and that the process could help to generate some consensus on a way forward among populations in government-controlled areas, which could help to facilitate the implementation of the agreement reached through the IGAD mediation.[41]

The SPLM Reunification process began shortly after the conflict broke out and seeks to mend the rifts among the leadership of the SPLM.[42] Several African liberation movements, including Tanzania's Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM), South Africa's African National Congress (ANC) and Uganda's National Resistance Movement (NRM), have been associated with the initiative over the years. Proponents of SPLM Reunification maintain that the SPLM is the only political institution that is able to unite South Sudanese from across the country and, if it were to disappear, that South Sudan would be left at the mercy of zero-sum ethnic-based politics. An academic described the underlying rationale:

> The SPLM has become a unifying myth. That's why every group that breaks away wants to retain the name SPLM. … [O]nce you change the name, you lose something of the myth of a New Sudan of equality where there is no discrimination. You also lose the notion of a new country. … Once you puncture that notion of a unifying movement, I don't know what you have left. You need some glue that would bring people together but that is not there.[43]

Critics argue that the SPLM no longer provides the political stability and predictability that it once did and that the way forward is to look beyond the SPLM to create a new political dispensation in the country. As a non-SPLM member of an armed opposition group explained:

> I don't agree with the notion that the SPLM is the only hope for South Sudan. I agree the concepts with which the SPLM was started are valid, not just for South Sudan but for any country. I still subscribe to those old ideas, but I would only hop on the wagon if the machinery for translating those ideas into action were in place. The machinery are the structures of the SPLM which are not for transforming those principles into action.[44]

> Parallel peace processes have been initiated alongside the IGAD mediation effort

Most interviewees viewed both the National Dialogue and the SPLM Reunification as flawed for being insufficiently inclusive, politicising reconciliation efforts to benefit specific parties, and providing opportunities for forum shopping that have undermined the IGAD process. Nonetheless, interviewees also expressed a consensus viewpoint that such political processes were necessary to long-term sustainable peace and, if approached in a more consultative and inclusive manner, could complement any elite pact that emerges from the regional mediation. At the 31 October 2018 peace celebration in Juba, Kiir appeared to leave the door open for such an approach to the National Dialogue, saying:

> I have a proposal. I want all the parties to the Agreement to embrace and endorse the National Dialogue as a viable process and if for any reason there are concerns with the set-up or personalities leading this process, we should be flexible to consider those concerns, provided that the tremendous work that is already done at the grassroots is recognized as the point of departure and that the regional conferences and

the National conference should be conducted on the basis of a new consensus.[45]

Whether opposition groups feel empowered enough to engage with the National Dialogue process on equal footing will depend in large part on how government and opposition leaders engage with one another during the pre-transitional period, and on their ability to build sufficient trust among themselves to bring the broader population into the discussion of the way forward for South Sudan.

Political and security arenas

South Sudan's security arena is comprised of a multitude of armed groups, ranging from well-equipped and well-trained forces that can be deployed anywhere in the country to community defence groups, ethnic militia and armed cattle-camp youth that operate in specific geographic localities.[46] Depending on the criteria used, there could be as many as 40 or more armed groups currently operating in South Sudan. The subsections below provide an overview of the main political formations and armed groups in the government and opposition.[47]

Shrinking inner circle in government

In many respects, the incumbent government appears to be fairly inclusive, with senior officials from a range of ethnic groups.[48] Government critics, however, maintain that over the course of the conflict, power has been concentrated in the hands of increasingly fewer people, many of them from the Rek subgroup of Dinka. An academic interviewed for this study characterised it as 'the Gogrialization of government', suggesting that the president was consolidating control in leaders from his home state of Gogrial and neighbouring states of Twic and Tonj (formerly Warrap State).[49] According to interviewees, the most politically salient of this group are:

- Kiir
- Akol Koor Kuc, Director General for Internal Security
- Nhial Deng Nhial, Minister of Foreign Affairs
- Santino Deng Wol, Commander of SPLA ground forces[50]
- Mayiik Ayii Deng, Minister in the Office of the President
- Salvatore Garang Mabiordit, Minister of Finance
- Awut Deng Acuil, Minister of Gender
- Tor Deng Mawien, Presidential Advisor on Decentralisation
- Ambrose Riiny Thiik, former chief justice and Chairperson of the Jieng Council of Elders (JCE)[51]
- Chan Reec Madut, current Chief Justice

The concentration of political power corresponds to a concentration of military resources. According to interviewees, the two best-equipped, -trained and -resourced armed groups at the moment are the Tiger Division (or Presidential Guard) and the National Security Services (NSS), which are loyal to Kiir and Koor.[52] As part of the organised forces, these groups display attributes of a formal military; they are paid through the state budget, for example, and have military ranks and uniforms. In practice, however, the security sector functions more like 'a complex hybrid of incorporated clusters of armed men', in which loyalties are often attached more to specific individuals than to the institutions themselves.[53]

> While the government may have gained the upper hand militarily, it has not succeeded in winning the peace

Koor's ascent is particularly noteworthy in that he was promoted from a junior officer in the SPLA to the head of one of the best-equipped forces in a relatively short period of time. By empowering the NSS, Kiir was able to counterbalance the growing influence of his chief of staff, Paul Malong (see additional information on Malong's rebellion below). Koor's rise to power may also be explained as an unintended consequence of the ARCSS.[54] The security arrangements in the ARCSS focused on the SPLA and did not cover the NSS, which gave the government an opportunity to channel resources through an armed group that was not explicitly bound by the terms of the agreement. The enactment of the NSS Act in 2014 formalised the NSS's police powers, granting it the authority to arrest and detain suspects, monitor communications, conduct searches and seize property.[55]

A series of military offensives over the years has given government forces a distinct advantage on the battlefield. As a civil society representative explained:

> [T]he government doesn't see any major threat from the opposition. Of course, the opposition seems to have faced more difficulties. They are not able to mobilize more people and more resources. I'm not sure that more people want to fight to join these groups.[56]

While the government may have gained the upper hand militarily, it has not succeeded in winning the peace. As a government official noted: 'It is a fact that the government has conquered militarily, but in the process, it has alienated the civilians. The civilians have been caught up in the conflict.'[57] The tactics that the government has used have also tarnished its reputation internationally. Relationships with international allies such as the US are at an all time low, as was apparent when the US lobbied intensely for the adoption of UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 2428 in July 2018, which placed an arms embargo on South Sudan and extended sanctions to two additional individuals.[58]

Government alliances among Nuer leaders

Although the government is sometimes characterised as Dinka-dominated, it nonetheless includes a number of prominent Nuer leaders. Foremost among them is Deng Gai, currently serving as first vice-president and leading a faction of the SPLM-IO that split from Machar's group and has remained part of the transitional government since July 2016. Several interviewees trace the outbreak of violence in Juba in 2016 to Deng Gai and his ambitions to be appointed as minister of petroleum in the transitional government.[59] According to interviewees, Machar instead appointed Dak Duop Bishop, in order to consolidate his leadership position and avoid installing a potential competitor in such an important ministry. This decision allegedly provoked Deng Gai to align himself with the government to push Machar out and assume his position in the transitional government.

Since joining the government, Deng Gai has reportedly been able to use his position to launch offensives against SPLM-IO forces loyal to Machar in different parts of the country, but his political influence is somewhat limited outside of Juba.[60] Deng Gai also has political opponents among the Nuer in the government, particularly Joseph Nguen Monytuil, an influential politician from the Bul Nuer community of Northern Liech State, and Matthew Puljang, commander of a militia that was integrated into the SPLA after the conflict began.[61] According to interviewees, Monytuil and Puljang's grievances with Deng Gai relate to state-level politics in Unity State, where Deng Gai served as governor until his removal by Kiir in July 2013.[62] Deng Gai's allies in government include several other prominent Nuer politicians, including Ezekiel Gatkuoth, currently serving as Minister of Petroleum, and Hussein Maar Nyuot, currently serving as Minister of Humanitarian Affairs.

> Although the government is sometimes characterised as Dinka-dominated, it includes a number of Nuer leaders

Since the outbreak of conflict in 2013, Puljang's militia, the South Sudan Liberation Movement (SSLM), has assumed greater importance as an armed group tasked with protecting the Unity oil fields.[63] The SSLM was technically integrated into the SPLA in 2014, but Puljang reportedly retains independent command and control and a separate budget. Human Rights Watch has included Puljang in a list of nine individuals it says should be sanctioned for human rights violations and abuses committed during the conflict.[64]

SPLM-IO and its constraints

The SPLM-IO is the largest armed opposition group in South Sudan. The SPLM-IO emerged at the start of the conflict in December 2013, when the mass killing of Nuer civilians in Juba prompted Nuer commanders in the SPLA to rebel and join forces with Nuer militia, such as the White Army, to attack towns in Greater Upper Nile, including Bor, Bentiu and Malakal. The group has struggled to transition from a popular mobilisation to protect a specific community into a revolutionary movement with a clear political agenda. According to a faith leader interviewed for this study,

> [w]hen [Riek] came to hijack the community mobilization [of Nuer], he had his own ambition for power. The people had their own plans for revenge. Then in the process the political leadership used communal resentment as the source of mobilization.[65]

Although the SPLM-IO leadership includes a few prominent leaders from other ethnic groups, such as

Henry Odwar, a Lango from Ikotos and head of the SPLM-IO delegation to the HLRF, and Mabior de Garang, a Bor Dinka and chairperson of the SPLM-IO Committee for Information and Public Relations, its main power base rests with Nuer politicians and generals. Other prominent SPLM-IO leaders include Angelina Teny, wife of Machar and head of the SPLM-IO National Committee for Security and Defence, and Simon Gatwech Dual, chief of staff for the SPLM-IO and under UNSC sanctions since July 2015.

> Machar remains popular at the grassroots level and in some ways has become a symbol of the Nuer nation

A series of major government offensives over the last three years has left the SPLM-IO with a few remaining strongholds in Akobo and Southern Liech. Internal divisions, a lack of resources, competition with other opposition groups, and Machar's prolonged house arrest in South Africa further undermined its effectiveness on the battlefield. Some senior SPLM-IO members also express dissatisfaction with Machar's leadership style, saying that he is reluctant to empower the people around him to make decisions, and that he has not invested in the kind of ground game that is necessary to sustain a revolutionary movement. According to a member of an armed opposition group,

> Riek shouldn't have declared that he's leading a rebellion. He should have went and organized the movement before raising its profile. It's because he's interested in power and not a broader mission. People have struggled to convince him about all the things we need before we can create a revolution.[66]

Despite the misgivings among some SPLM-IO intellectuals, Machar remains popular at the grassroots level and in some ways has become a symbol of the Nuer nation.[67] The SPLM-IO brand has attracted the allegiance of localised opposition groups in various parts of South Sudan, including armed groups among the Fertit in Wau, the Arrow Boys and other armed groups in Mundri and Maridi, and among the Bari-speaking peoples in Central Equatoria, as well as the Nuer White Army.[68] In addition to Machar's profile, the SPLM-IO's participation in the IGAD mediation also explains its allure to smaller armed groups, in that armed groups allied with the SPLM-IO receive rewards through the peace agreement.

THE SPLM-IO IS THE LARGEST ARMED OPPOSITION GROUP IN SOUTH SUDAN

Among the more militarily significant forces allied to the SPLM-IO are the Agwelek militia of Johnson Olony, a Shilluk general who was allied to the government until he defected to the SPLM-IO in 2015. Olony's defection was driven, in large part, by a perception that the government was supporting the neighbouring Padang Dinka's encroachment onto Shilluk lands on the east bank of the Nile. In May 2015 Olony's forces launched an offensive that almost

succeeded in capturing the oil fields in Paloich before they were pushed back by the government.[69]

Political dynamics in Greater Equatoria

The transitional government includes several senior politicians from Greater Equatoria, including Vice-President Wani Igga, Minister of Cabinet Affairs Martin Elia Lomuro, Minister of National Security Obote Mamur, and Minister of Housing Jemma Nunu Kumba. SPLM-IO politicians from the Equatorias allied with Deng Gai provide a countervailing political base and include personalities such as Alfred Lado Gore, Minister of Housing, Physical Planning and Environment, and Richard Mulla, Minister of Federal Affairs.

Political dynamics in Greater Equatoria have shifted more over the course of the conflict than in either of the other two regions (Greater Upper Nile and Greater Bahr el Ghazal). The violence of July 2016 marked a turning point at which a conflict that had largely been restricted to fighting among Dinka and Nuer armed groups in Greater Upper Nile spread to engulf the Equatorias. Government forces targeted communities that were seen to be harbouring SPLM-IO elements, triggering an exodus of refugees to neighbouring countries. An academic explained how the violence in the Equatorias heightened feelings of marginalisation among communities residing there and generated support for the armed opposition:

> This is a different kind of brutality that is working to sustain the system, but it's also working to sustain those people who are fighting against the system. When you see people working in the refugee camps, people going house to house for money, they don't do it for Thomas [Cirillo], but they say they can finally have their own struggle. They called us [Equatorians] women for not participating in the liberation. This is our time to correct these sentiments.[70]

The spread of the war to the Equatorias led to the emergence of a number of Equatoria-based movements, such as the National Salvation Front (NAS) in September 2016. The creation of the NAS and the shortage of resources in the SPLM-IO prompted several armed groups associated with the SPLM-IO in the Equatorias to shift allegiances, leading to violent clashes. A member of an armed opposition group explained the sequence of events:

> What happened is that a lot of officers who have never seen organization in IO, from Bahr-el-Ghazal, from Equatoria and Upper Nile, have abandoned IO. It flared up in Central Equatoria, where an IO officer resigned and joined NAS. We didn't have anyone out there recruiting fellows. IO said we should turn him back with his weapons and his men. Then they mobilized IO forces to go and attack him and it led to fighting. The same thing in Kajokeji.[71]

The longer-term political game for opposition leaders from Greater Equatoria is to carve out a space for themselves in the larger body politic and to develop a political agenda that resonates with groups in other parts of the country.[72] According to interviewees, many groups in the Equatorias feel as though they have been marginalised by more militarised groups among the Dinka and Nuer for not having made as much of a contribution during the 22-year liberation struggle.[73] What was lacking was great enough popular mobilisation among communities in the Equatorias to make armed resistance a viable strategy. The post-July 2016 government offensives in the Equatorias and the abuses associated with these created an opportunity in this regard, in that there is a sense that communities in the Equatorias must now mobilise to protect themselves from a Dinka- and Nuer-dominated state apparatus.

> Political dynamics in Greater Equatoria have shifted more over the course of the conflict than in either of the other regions

Emergence of the Opposition Alliance

After July 2016, as the fighting intensified and the SPLM-IO's influence waned, an array of other armed opposition groups began to emerge. These groups are mostly led by disgruntled politicians and military officers who have either been pushed out of the government or SPLM-IO, or defected owing to dissatisfaction with the leadership. In 2018, 10 of these opposition groups came together to form the South Sudan Opposition Alliance (SSOA) in order to put forward a unified position in the HLRF.[74]

The SSOA includes military officers who have extensive combat experience in both current and past wars, but the groups have limited military capabilities and suffer from

similar resource constraints as the SPLM-IO. According to interviewees, the SSOA and SPLM-IO discussed the possibility of the SPLM-IO's joining the alliance, but Machar placed certain conditions on the SPLM-IO's participation that it could not accept, including that the SPLM-IO serve as head of the alliance.[75]

At this writing, the SSOA is headed by Gabriel Changson, a Nuer politician who served in the regional government in southern Sudan prior to the signing of the CPA in 2005 and has held several different ministerial posts since then. Prominent SSOA members from Greater Equatoria include Joseph Bakosoro, a former governor in Western Equatoria, and Thomas Cirillo, a Bari from Central Equatoria and formerly the SPLA deputy chief of staff for logistics. Nuer military leaders in the SSOA include Peter Gadet, a career rebel with a long history of fighting on various sides of the political divide throughout the civil war and the interim period that followed the signing of the CPA, and Bapiny Monytuil, a former ally of Puljang who defected from the SPLA in October 2016. Other prominent members include Lam Akol, a Shilluk politician who was very active in the political opposition in Juba before leaving the country to start an armed rebellion in 2016, and Abdel Bagi Ayii, a Malual Dinka from Aweil who has been associated with several rebellions over the years.

The SSOA's members have little in common beyond their opposition to the government. Several interviewees accused members of the SSOA of chasing government positions in the HLRF process and questioned their cohesiveness as a group. The tenuous nature of the alliance became apparent during the talks in Khartoum, when senior figures in four of the groups – NAS, FDs, PDM and UDRA – refused to sign the R-ARCSS.[76]

Paul Malong's rebellion

As the conflict intensified in 2016/17, tensions began rising between Koor and then chief of defence, Paul Malong. Several interviewees traced the dispute to Koor's support for Nhial Deng as a successor to Kiir, whereas Malong had hoped that he himself would succeed Kiir.[77] Kiir reportedly sided with Koor, removing Malong from his position in May 2017. After an aborted attempt to flee to his home area of Aweil and a tense standoff at his home in Juba, Malong was allowed to leave the country in November 2018, when he formed a rebel group called the South Sudan United Front (SSUF) and declared his intention to overthrow Kiir.[78]

The standoff between Kiir and Malong brought the prospect of fighting among Dinka armed groups to the fore for the first time since the conflict began. One major line of division, in this regard, can be traced to a sentiment expressed by some Dinka from Bahr-el-Ghazal during the civil war, namely that they comprised the majority of fighting forces in the SPLA while Dinka from other groups, especially Dinka Bor, were disproportionately represented at the command level. The rifts among Dinka groups came to the surface in 2004, just before the signing of the CPA, when a rumour surfaced that Dr John Garang was planning to arrest Kiir and a dispute broke out between the two men.[79] The SPLM leadership managed to resolve the dispute, and when Garang died in a helicopter crash in 2005, the SPLM united behind Kiir. Yet the tensions between the pro-Kiir and pro-Garang elements in the SPLM persisted.

> The SSOA's members have little in common beyond their opposition to the government

These tensions are often used to explain why Kiir has marginalised political leaders from other Dinka subgroups by empowering their political opponents at the local level. As a member of an opposition group explained:

> Rumbek and the Agar [Dinka] in particular were close to John Garang. With the rise of Salva to power they lost favor with the center and became marginalized. They are no different from the [Bor Dinka] community of John Garang. Because of the historical relation they were marginalized. … [Kiir] used to take them as one of two constituencies in Bahr-el-Ghazal, that is Abyei and Rumbek, they were the two constituencies that didn't support him. So he started to marginalize them.[80]

Despite numerous requests, IGAD did not include the SSUF in the HLRF. Although the SSUF is not a member of the SSOA, the SSOA offered SSUF representatives several slots through which they were able to participate in HLRF discussions. Some interviewees saw the exclusion of the SSUF from the mediation as a critical

mistake.[81] Others questioned whether Malong had the support on the ground that he would need to pose a significant threat. According to an academic,

> [b]y and large, these are personal ambitions. The fragmentation doesn't have a real substantive content that has to do with the vision for the country. Paul Malong is saying that if the talks are providing positions for people, why not us.[82]

Historical grievances complicate efforts to forge coalitions and contribute to fragmentation

The other factor limiting Malong's ability to mount a rebellion is the competing power centres in Aweil. Malong's political opponents in Aweil include Bagi Ayii and Garang with the SSPM, and Dau Aturjong, formerly a member of the SPLM-IO and currently serving as SPLA Division Three Commander in Aweil. Meanwhile, several members of the Jieng (or Dinka) Council of Elders (JCE) are rumoured to sympathise with Malong.[83] As is the case with the armed opposition more broadly, historical grievances complicate efforts to forge coalitions across political lines and contribute to the fragmentation of South Sudan's security arena.

Political opposition groups

Several political formations participated in the HLRF process on the basis of their political stature, despite the fact that they are not associated with armed groups. Foremost among these are the FDs (sometimes called G10).[84] Although they participated as a bloc in the HLRF, in practice they are a rather heterogeneous group with diverging interests on many issues. Several FDs, including John Luk Jok, Madut Biar and Deng Alor Kuol, held ministerial posts through the ARCSS. Some interviewees maintain that their participation in government has caused these FDs to moderate their criticisms of Kiir.[85] Other FDs, such as Pagan Amum, Majak D'Agoot, Oyai Deng Ajak, Kosti Manibe and Cirillo Hiteng, are associated with the SSOA and adopt a more confrontational tone. An academic interviewed for this study highlighted the fractured nature of the FDs, saying, 'There is no G10, there are only G2s.'[86] These fractures became apparent when Amum broke ranks with the other FDs and refused to sign the R-ARCSS.[87]

Several other non-SPLM political formations are participating in the HLRF, including the People's Democratic Movement (PDM) and three groupings of political parties called the Agenda, National Alliance and Umbrella. Prior to the HLRF, under the leadership of Dr Lam Akol who was then leading the Democratic Change (DC) party in Juba, the opposition parties mounted a number of legal challenges to government decisions, including a proposal to hold elections in June 2015, a constitutional amendment in 2015 to extend the government's term for three years, and the 28 states decree of October 2013.[88] When the pressure on Akol in Juba became too great, he relocated to Khartoum and launched an armed rebellion through the National Democratic Movement (NDM). Since his departure, opposition parties based in Juba have been less vocal. According to interviewees, the individuals participating in the HLRF closely mirror the negotiating posture of the transitional government.[89]

Mediation dynamics

IGAD's mediation in South Sudan, while ultimately successful at brokering agreements among the warring parties, has been fraught with difficulties since the intergovernmental body first assumed responsibility for the peace process in January 2014. IGAD assumed responsibility for mediating the conflict in accordance with the AU's principle of subsidiarity, which assigns primary responsibility for conflict resolution to regional economic communities (RECs) when the state concerned is unable or unwilling to resolve the conflict.[90] The fact that IGAD mediated the process leading to the signing of the CPA in 2005 also made it a logical choice for a regional and international community that had been caught off guard by the intensity of the violence. The subsections below outline the main challenges that confronted the mediation and describe some of the unintended consequences of the regional intervention.

Challenges for the mediation

The IGAD mediation faced two major political challenges: the zero-sum thinking of the warring parties, which remained committed to military solutions and unwilling to compromise; and the manner in which IGAD member

states attempted to use the process to advance narrowly-defined bilateral interests.[91] With respect to the first challenge, it was clear from the start that the warring parties lacked the trust and political will to peacefully resolve their dispute. A faith leader who participated in the HLRF explained:

> People always shift to IGAD, but the problem is our problem. It doesn't matter who you bring. IGAD has tried its best. People are saying this approach of IGAD of having workshops and discussions, it assumes that we don't know what we are doing. But we actually know what happened and how to fix it. The problem is that we don't have the courage and the security to talk to each other.[92]

Yet this intransigence was arguably enabled by IGAD member states that were using the process to protect allies and promote bilateral interests. For example, on several occasions mediators asked that parties that have violated the peace agreement be subject to punitive measures, and at one point the IGAD Council of Ministers even endorsed the idea, but the proposals were repeatedly stymied by the IGAD Assembly of Heads of State.[93] IGAD's reluctance to attribute responsibility for violations has also been apparent in the reporting of the Ceasefire and Transitional Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism (CTSAMM), which rarely attributes blame to specific individuals.[94]

> IGAD member states were often accused of using the mediation to promote their own interests

In addition to their inability to act decisively as guarantors of the agreement, IGAD member states were often accused of using the mediation to promote their own interests. Before tabling any proposal before the parties, the IGAD special envoy reportedly had to first get sign-off from IGAD member states. According to several interviewees, member states used this procedural requirement to place limits on the substantive proposals that mediators had at their disposal. Regional interests became even more pronounced in July 2018, when the process moved to Khartoum and Sudanese mediators assumed a lead role. The new mediators included language that would give Sudan a security role in South Sudan's oilfields, an important bilateral interest for Sudan but only tangentially related to the dispute among the warring parties.[95]

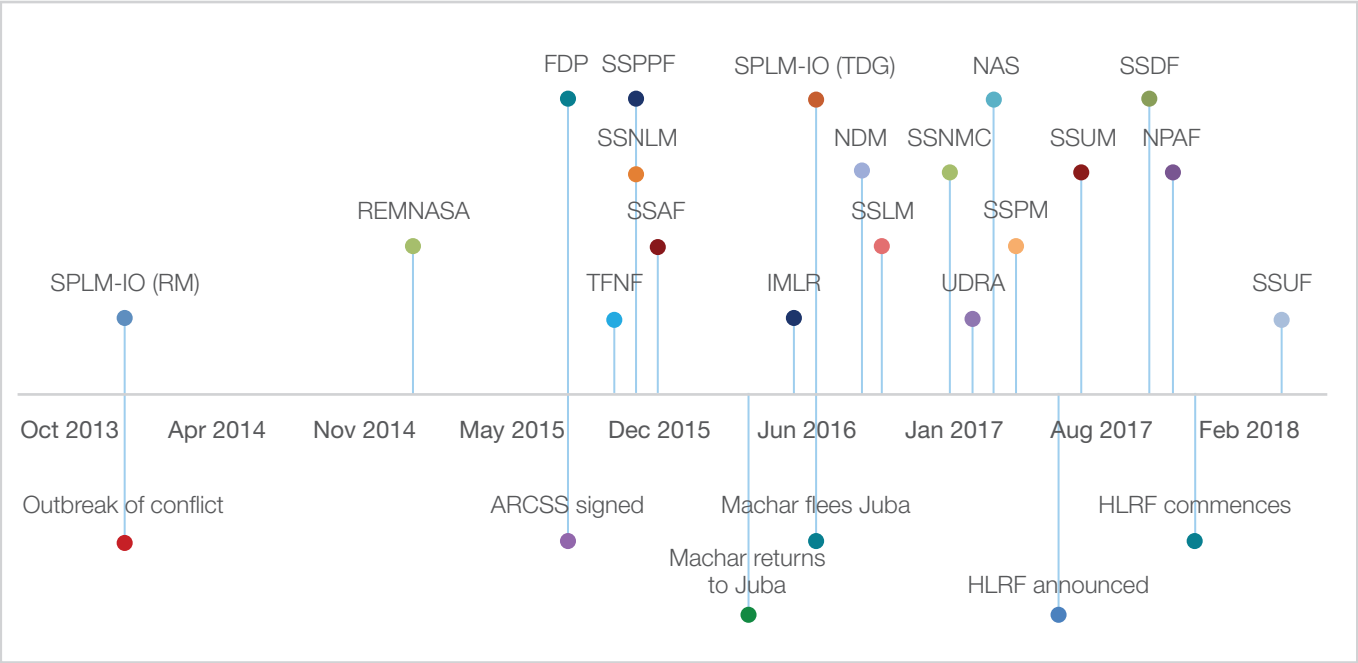
Unintended consequences of the mediation

Aside from regional interference in the process, the mediation also had a number of unintended consequences. The timing of the mediation effort, for example, played a fundamental role in shaping the calculations of the warring parties early on in the conflict. In previous wars (1955–72 and 1983–2005), regional actors did not initiate mediation efforts until a decade or more into the conflict when the situation appeared ripe for resolution, but in the current crisis the mediation effort was launched in a matter of weeks. Some interviewees asserted that the presence of an internationally backed mediation so early in the conflict provided disgruntled politicians and generals with a forum in which to pursue their personal ambitions, and as a result they did not invest in long-term strategies for achieving their political objectives. Most interviewees were cynical about the warring parties' interest in the peace process. An academic explained the prevailing viewpoint:

> What's going on is a contest of power in terms of positions. The groups have multiplied, and you ask yourself, do they really have a different vision for the country? No, they don't have a vision for the country, they have a vision for how to share power. You have these leaders of 15 or 16 groups that are at the table for what they can get out of it and not what they can do for the country as a whole.[96]

In addition, political manoeuvring around the signing of the ARCSS caused several SPLM-IO political and military leaders to leave the movement and form their own armed opposition groups. The success of Nuer-dominated armed groups in gaining concessions through the ARCSS prompted various armed groups in the Equatorias to try to do the same, so that their grievances would be addressed. The collapse of the ARCSS in July 2016 and Machar's isolation in South Africa also incentivised new armed groups to enter the conflict in anticipation of political rewards through any future mediation effort. The timeline in Figure 2 tracks the emergence of armed groups against key milestones in the peace process.

Figure 2: Timeline showing emergence of armed groups*



* Armed groups such as the SSLM and SSUM can be traced back to the 22-year war, but the timeline marks their emergence from when the relevant military leader defected from government or the SPLM-IO.

Conclusion and recommendations

The signing of the R-ARCSS in September 2018 has provided a glimmer of hope that the long war in South Sudan may soon come to an end. But for the agreement to succeed, political and military leaders must overcome their differences and convince the people of South Sudan and the broader international community that they are committed to transforming the way politics is done. The war is governed by conflict dynamics that stretch back generations and arise from a common set of factors, including a state that is unable to deliver security or services to the vast majority of its people and deeply rooted historical grievances that sometimes prevent individuals and communities from cooperating for mutual gain. Addressing the underlying drivers of conflict and consolidating peace will be no small feat. This report makes several recommendations for how IGAD, the AU and the broader international community can support South Sudan on its journey towards sustainable peace.

Use the institutions that will be established by the R-ARCSS and other post-conflict recovery initiatives to build trust among the leadership. The political landscape in South Sudan has become so fractured that it threatens the viability of the state. The R-ARCSS has established mechanisms that allow continued negotiations among parties through such bodies as the National Pre-Transitional Committee (NPTC), which oversees arrangements during the pre-transitional period, and the Independent Boundaries Commission (IBC), which is meant to determine the number of states before the R-TGONU can be established. The ability of the parties to reach consensus in these bodies and speak with a unified voice will be an important early test of their ability to work together in the R-TGONU. The AU and IGAD should support these efforts and ensure that regional representatives in the various bodies are empowered to engage in an effective manner. The National Dialogue, if reformed to become more independent and inclusive, can also help to bridge divides among the various parties.

Continue to invest in unifying opposition groups and remove incentives for infighting. At the moment, some of the greatest potential for violence lies with individuals and groups that are not signatories to the R-ARCSS, such as Malong's SSUF and Cirillo's NAS. During the HLRF process, the SSOA provided a platform through which these opposition groups could harmonise their positions and build trust. Although the alliances in the SSOA were put under considerable strain with the signing of the R-ARCSS, the gains that were made during the HLRF in terms of unifying the opposition should not be discarded.

Regional and international actors should continue to engage with opposition leaders who did not sign the R-ARCSS and encourage signatories to the agreement to look for ways to bring the non-signatories into the fold.

Maintain the pressure on the leadership in South Sudan to implement the R-ARCSS and impose punitive measures on parties that violate the agreement. The semblance of political will that the leadership in South Sudan has displayed in recent months has come about as a result of intense pressure for peace from the region and from within the country. This pressure should be maintained to ensure that the parties move ahead with implementation. IGAD and the international community should also ensure that punitive measures are swiftly imposed on individuals and groups that fail to adhere to the agreements that have been signed to date. If the region fails to act in this regard, the AU and the UN have a responsibility to intervene in its absence.

> Some of the greatest potential for violence lies with individuals and groups that are not signatories to the R-ARCSS

Support constructive engagement by IGAD member states in ensuring the R-ARCSS is implemented while preventing the imposition of their bilateral interests in a manner that is contrary to South Sudan's long-term interests. The newfound cooperation between Sudan and Uganda is among the factors that contributed to the success of the IGAD mediation. However, the extent to which their increased engagement reflects a recognition that peace in South Sudan is in the interest of region as whole, as opposed to an opportunity to advance bilateral interests, remains a subject of speculation. Moving forward, the AU could play a robust oversight role in the implementation of the R-ARCSS to moderate any regional interference in the process.

Support civic actors to participate effectively in institutions that are established under the R-ARCSS and to serve as a bridge between political and military leaders and populations on the ground. Civic actors, including faith leaders, civil society, women's leaders, youth leaders and traditional authorities, have been engaging in crucial peacebuilding efforts for the duration of the conflict. Efforts to build trust among the parties by church and civil society representatives to the HLRF, and the manner in which refugee representatives to the process drew people's attention to the suffering that the conflict has caused, were instrumental in creating an environment that was conducive to compromise. Regional actors and donors should support such activities in a more robust and coordinated manner. They should encourage civic actors to engage more actively in the implementation of the peace agreement, including through those mechanisms where civic actors are directly represented, so as not to be overshadowed by the actions of armed and political actors. Part of this revolves around the urgent need to raise awareness about the peace agreement, as the more that South Sudanese feel a sense of ownership over the R-ARCSS, the greater the political costs for parties that seek to violate it.

Ensure that the requirements in the R-ARCSS to appoint a minimum number of women to leadership positions are adhered to. With a few notable exceptions, prominent women leaders are conspicuously absent from the above mapping of armed groups and political formations. Many decades of conflict in South Sudan have reinforced militarised masculinities that sometimes discourage women from actively contributing to matters of public interest. Gender quotas are provided in the R-ARCSS, which among other things require that at least 12 of the 35 ministers and one of the five vice-presidents appointed to the transitional government are women. The incorporation of women leaders into governance institutions in this manner could fundamentally change political dynamics and create incentives for women more generally to engage more actively with the peace process.

Appendix 1: List of Acronyms

ANC	African National Congress
ARCSS	Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan
AU	African Union
AUCISS	African Union Commission of Inquiry on South Sudan
CAR	Central African Republic
CCM	Chama Cha Mapinduzi
CNHPR	Committee on National Healing, Peace and Reconciliation
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CTSAMM	Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism
DOP	Declaration of Principles
EAC	East African Community
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
EU	European Union
FDP	Federal Democratic Party
FDs	Former Detainees
HLRF	High-Level Revitalization Forum
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority for Development
IMLR	Islamic Movement for the Liberation of Raja
JCE	Jieng [Dinka] Council of Elders
NAS	National Salvation Front
NDM	National Democratic Movement
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NPAF	National People's Alliance Forces
NRM	National Resistance Movement
PDM	People's Democratic Movement
R-ARCSS	Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in Republic of South Sudan
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
REMNASA	Revolutionary Movement for National Salvation
R-TGONU	Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity
SPLA	Sudan People's Liberation Army
SPLM	Sudan People's Liberation Movement
SPLM-IO	Sudan People's Liberation Movment-in-Opposition
SSAF	South Sudan Armed Forces
SSDF	South Sudan Defense Forces
SSDF	South Sudan Democratic Front
SSLM	South Sudan Liberation Movement
SSNLM	South Sudan National Liberation Movement
SSNMC	South Sudan National Movement for Change
SSPM	South Sudan Patriotic Movement
SSPPF	South Sudan People's Patriotic Front
SSUF	South Sudan United Front
SSUM	South Sudan United Movement
TFNF	Tiger Faction New Forces
TGONU	Transitional Government of National Unity
UDRA	United Democratic Republic Alliance
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
US	United States

Notes

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8 AU, Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement and Army (SPLM/A), 2005, https://peaceaccords.nd.edu/sites/default/files/accords/SudanCPA.pdf. IGAD also mediated the CPA process, which is one of the reasons that it was seen as a logical choice of mediator after the December 2013 crisis.

9 According to official statistics, 98.8% of the electorate voted for separation. See Carter Center, Observing the 2011 referendum on the self-determination of southern Sudan: final report, 2011, https://www.cartercenter.org/resources/pdfs/news/peace_publications/election_reports/finalreport-sudan-2011-self-determination-referendum.pdf.

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12 World Bank, Country engagement note for the republic of South Sudan, FY 18-19, 7 November 2017, http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/112071516734556800/pdf/IDA-R2017-0340-11172017.pdf.

13 Interview with academic, Kenya, 8 June 2018.

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among South Sudanese and caused many to fall back on zero-sum ethnic politics. The references to ethnic dynamics are not meant to imply that the conflict in South Sudan is essentially an ethnic war. On the contrary, the references to ethnicity instead demonstrate its limits as a tool of analysis and the need to look at other ways in which power manifests in the South Sudanese context.

48 Senior government officials include individuals from Nuer (First Vice-President, Taban Deng Gai), Bari (Vice-President, Wani Igga), Pojulu (Minister of Cabinet Affairs and Head of Government delegation to the HLRF, Martin Elia Lomuro), Lotuka (Minister of National Security, Obote Mamur), Murle (Governor of Boma State, formerly Deputy Minister of Labour and Public Service, David Yau Yau), Dinka Agar (Daniel Awet Akot, Deputy Speaker in the Legislative Assembly) and Dinka Bor (Minister of Information, Michael Makuei, and Minister of Defence, Kuol Manyang).

49 Interview with academic, US, 18 June 2018.

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73 Ibid. The Equatorias share a border with Kenya and Uganda and many

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74 Current SSOA members include Federal Democratic Party (FDP), FDs, National Salvation Front (NAS), National Democratic Movement (NDM), People's Democratic Movement (PDM), SSLM, South Sudan National Movement for Change (SSNMC), South Sudan Patriotic Movement (SSPM), South Sudan United Movement (SSUM) and United Democratic Republic Alliance (UDRA).

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