

JoMUN XV

Forum: Advisory Panel

Issue: Preventing Ethnic Violence in South Sudan

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INTRODUCTION

Ethnic violence refers to the conflict created by ethnic hostility and hatred. This type of aggression is seen in various parts of the world but is extremely prevalent in South Sudan. South Sudan has had a long history regarding its ethnic violence and in April, 2017, the Secretary of the United Kingdom's Department for International Development, Pri Patel, labeled the ethnic violence in South Sudan as genocide. South Sudan currently has around 64 tribes and the most apparent tribe is the Dinkas who compose of about 35% of South Sudan's population and dominate the government. The Nuer are the second largest tribe in South Sudan. The violence usually occurs between nomadic groups over the issue of cattle and grazing. South Sudan is a country with multiple issues but ethnic violence is one of the most prevalent and must be addressed for the future success of the country.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

The Nuer

The Nuer people are Nilotic meaning they are indigenous to the Nile Valley. The majority of the Nuer are situated in South Sudan. This ethnic group speak the Nuer language which belongs to the Nilo-Saharan family. Cattle is a big part of a Nuer's lifestyle as they herd cattle for a living. The Nuer's have been historically viewed as semi-nomadic.

The Dinka

The Dinka are an ethnic group who are mostly situated in South Sudan and make up 35% of South Sudan's population. Like the Nuer, the Dinka also rely heavily on cattle.

Ethnic Violence

Conflict between ethnic groups created by ethnic hostility and/or hatred.

BACKGROUND ON THE ISSUE

Civil War

This civil war is being fought between the South Sudanese government and opposition forces. The war has caused over 50,000 casualties and displaced over 1.6 million people.

Nomadic Raiding

The Murle and Lou Nuer people are both nomadic. They are also very centred around their cattle and use their cattle as a store of wealth as well as food. In their culture, men can buy a bride if they have 20 cows and this has caused cattle raiding between the tribes. Cattle has not been the only issue for these nomadic groups, tensions over land and water have created violence that has dated

way back. The attacks carried out by these groups on one another are often targeted on each others villages, which are burned to the ground even though people are inside of them. Aside from attempting to acquire cattle, various militias will involve themselves in village raids and abduct children who they eventually raise as their own. The Murle in specific have been notorious for conducting these raids in order to increase the size of their small group. These attacks used to be carried out with machetes and sticks, except due the civil war, the ethnic groups have acquired guns and now the majority of the people are armed with advanced weapons.

Dominance of the Dinka Group

Dinkocracy is the term used to described the dominance of the Dinka group. The Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), as well as the army, the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), have both been convicted of literally being dominated by the Dinka group. The Jieng Council of Elders who are a dinka lobbying group have also been convicted of being behind strict SPLM policies. Before the Sudanese Civil War, the army soldiers were made up of individuals from a variety of ethnic groups. This is no longer the case as the SPLA has become mostly filled with a militia of soldiers who are from the Dinka stronghold of Bahr el Ghazal. President Kiir who is also situated in Bahr el Ghazal is a Dinka as well as the Chief of Staff. The army has been labeled by the other ethnic groups as the "Dinka army."

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

United Nations Mission in South Sudan

The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) is a peacekeeping mission within South Sudan. The mandate of this mission is to assist the government in peace consolidation, economic growth, and state building. This mission also aims at creating a safe and secure environment for the citizens where justice and security is present. The strength of the mission was increased after the security and political crisis broke out on the December 15th, 2013. UNMISS's headquarters are situated in the South Sudan's capital, Juba.

South Sudan's Liberation Movement

The Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) is a political party in South Sudan. The SPLM became the ruling party when South Sudan became a sovereign state on 9 July 2011.

Sudan's People's Liberation Army

The Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) is also referred to as the South Sudan Defence Forces (SSDF). The SPLA holds a strong relationship with the SPLM as the two bodies are made up of the Dinka group.

South Sudan Democratic Movement

After George Athor lost a contested election in 2010, he founded the South Sudan Democratic Movement (SSDM). This group is broad coalition that is composed of factions who feel neglected by the Dinka dominated SPLA and complain about them. The Shilluk people who are the leaders of the Upper Nile Faction and the Murle people who are the leaders of the Cobra faction are the most notable people within this coalition. The government has been known to buy off community militia as well as pardon its leaders.

TIMELINE OF KEY EVENTS

March 2013	In addition to withdrawing troops, Sudan and South Sudan both agree to resume pumping oil. This action follows their resentful dispute over an event that led to the shutdown of oil production around a year prior to the negotiation.
December 2013	Due to an accusation made by President Salva Kiir, towards his former vice-president Riek Machar, supposedly plotting to overthrow him, a resulting Civil war erupts in South Sudan.
January 2014	Although broken several times over the subsequent weeks, a ceasefire is signed. Moreover, further peace talks in February, fail to put an end to the ongoing violence that results in more than a million people being displaced by April.
April 2014	The United Nations announces that pro- Machar forces raid the oil town of Bentiu, resulting in the casualties of hundreds of civilians.
July 2014	As a consequence of the power struggle within the governing Sudan People's Liberation Movement, President Kiir dismisses the the entire cabinet including his Vice- President, Riek Machar.
August 2014	As fighting continues, peace talks commence in the Ethiopian capital of Addis Abba, dragging on for several months.
April 2016	After three years, Riek Machar finally returns to the the capital of South Sudan, Juba, and is sworn in as the first vice-president in a new unity government system - however is sacked the following July after further conflict and goes back into exile.
November 2016	Resulting failure to protect civilians in Juba during July violence, prompts The United Nations sacking the Kenyan commander of its peacekeeping mission and the withdrawal of all Kenyan troops from South Sudan.
December 2016	President Salva Kiir denies the claim made by the United Nations commission on human rights that a process of ethnic cleansing is underway in several parts of South Sudan.
February 2017	As what the United Nations describes as the result of an economic collapse and a man-made catastrophe, a famine is revealed in parts of South Sudan.
May 2017	President Kiir declares unilateral ceasefire and launches national dialogue.

RELEVANT UN RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES, AND EVENTS

(RES/1996) UNMISS Mandate (2011)

This resolution was adopted directly after South Sudan received its independence from Sudan. The resolution is centred around the establishment of UNMISS:

https://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/past/unmis/documents/sres1996_2011.pdf

(SC/RES/2327) UNMISS Mandate (2016)

This resolution called for the strengthening of the UNMISS mandate. The resolution also showed the Security Council's deep concern in South Sudan's situation and stated that South Sudan's ethnic violence has also become a prevalent issue:

[https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2327\(2016\)](https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2327(2016))

(S/RES/2265) Report from SG (2016)

This is an official report from the UN Secretary General on the current situation in South Sudan. He addresses and analyses South Sudan's most pressing issues. Additionally, The Secretary General also addresses the violence between the Government and opposition forces in this report.

(SC/12596) Press Statement (2016)

Security Council members expressing deep concern regarding ethnic violence in South Sudan:

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2016/sc12596.doc.htm>

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, 2015

Salva Kiir, the South Sudanese President, officially signed a peace deal with rebels on the 27th of August, 2015. The President refused to sign the peace deal for more than a week but finally agreed to do so at a ceremony in South Sudan's capital, Juba. Both the presidents of Uganda and Kenya, who assisted in mediating the negotiations, as well as many other African leaders attended the conference. The rebel leader, Riek Machar, had already signed the peace deal a week before President Salva Kiir had. The Security Council was observing the entire event and stated that it was ready to take immediate action if President Salva Kiir did not agree to the accord. The country has been in a very poor state due to this conflict and issues such as rape, ethnic violence, and torture have become a common thing. Overall, the signing of this treaty was seen as a positive step for both groups.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Aid to the ethnic groups

These ethnic groups, especially the nomadic ones, rely heavily on cattle. If these ethnic groups were to be financially supported or provided resources to the extent that they no longer had to engage in conflict, then there would be far less casualties.

Disarmament

Ethnic violence, as stated previously, is usually carried out in the form of village raids. Ever since the start of the Civil War, the country has been packed with weapons. This provides the ethnic groups who are conducting the raids, with weapons. Disarming these ethnic groups would not eradicate the violence but it would drastically reduce the number of casualties and displaced people. This is simply due to the fact that advanced military technology can cause many more casualties compared to a hatchet or a stick.

Peace Talks

Peace talks, agreements, or treaties are all ways in which opposing forces could come permanently or temporarily come together. These meetings would have to be monitored and they would have to be beneficial for both sides of the conflict. Due to the fact that the Dinkas take up the majority of the governing bodies within South Sudan, the peace talks could enforce the fact that in order for there to be peace, the governing body should compose of representatives from various tribes/factions.

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APPENDIX OR APPENDICES

Refer to links above.