

CONFLICT IN SOUTH SUDAN: A THREAT TO INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the dynamics of the South Sudan conflict with emphasis on how it poses a threat to international peace and security. Since its independence, like those of other countries in the world, South Sudan has experienced huge human and material cost following decades of intense conflict between the Arab North and the non-Arab south. four years into the war, the number of displaced persons had increased to over 2.3 million people, as renewed fighting was taking place in the Equatorials, Western Bahr al Ghazal and the Greater Upper Nile, causing the death of thousands more. The theoretical framework employed in the study was the realist theory, which derives its impulse from the perspective that the nature of man is sinful and conflictual. Realism holds that political theory must flow from observation of history and experience of people and of nation-states, and that these show a pattern of violent and aggressive behavior. It was based on the qualitative methods of data collection and analysis. It was discovered that despite several peace agreements being signed, there were still weak support systems. The institutional bodies established to ensure the smooth implementation of the peace agreements had often fallen short of their mandate due to operational and institutional challenges that hindered them from operating efficiently. Following the above, the study recommended that there is a need to draft a new constitution for the country that will require the establishment of a political and economic system that guarantees each and every South Sudanese equity and equality.

Keywords: South Sudan, conflict, threat, international peace, security

INTRODUCTION

South Sudan became the youngest nation in the world after splitting from the larger Sudan to become the Republic of South Sudan in 2011. However, their independence, like that of other countries in the world, came with a huge human cost following decades of intense conflict between the Arab North and the non-Arab South. Baker (2016) noted that the intensity of the conflict was so destructive that it caught the attention of the international community, which embarked on a series of mediation and negotiation processes between the North and the South. Following several protocols and agreements signed by representatives of the North and the South between 2002 and 2004, these processes culminated in the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) on 9 January 2005(Jok, 2015). However, as the separation process was taking place, several key issues that were responsible for mistrust among groups in the non-Arab south were not addressed. The main focus was on the conflict between the North and the South, and not the ‘frozen’ and ‘cold’ relations among the different ethnicities in the South.

The referendum was overwhelmingly in favour of separation, with 99% of the votes cast approving the decision (Jok, 2015). For the North, however, this marked a major downgrade of their country's land mass as one-third of the land and about three-quarters of its oil reserves went to the new Republic of South Sudan (Ottaway and El-Sadany 2012).

A United Nations Security Council (2014) report stated that during the early days of the conflict, three hundred civilians lost their lives following an attack on Machar's ethnic group (Nuer) in Juba on the 15th December 2013. In retaliation, the Nuers plotted one of the deadliest revenge attacks on Kiir's ethnic group (Dinka), thus entrenching the conflict even further as it spread rapidly to other regions. The conflict was further fueled by Salva Kiir, who declared Machar and his allied senior Nuer military commanders as active rebels against the government (United Nations Security Council, 2013). The conflict continued undiminished for more than 20 months as regional neighbours struggled to make progress in negotiations under the regional umbrella of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD). For a long time, the absence of any unbinding commitment by the warring groups intensified the conflict as it spread to become one of the most ferocious civil conflicts witnessed in the first quarter of the 21st century. The above make it necessary to evaluate the dynamics of the South Sudan conflict with emphasis on how it poses a threat to International peace and security.

Statement of the Problem

In 2017, four years into the war, the number of displaced persons had increased to over 2.3 million people, as renewed fighting was taking place in the Equatorials, Western Bahr al Ghazal and the Greater Upper Nile, causing the death of thousands more (UNHCR 2018). The government was accused of illegal detentions, restriction of media freedom and suppression of critics. The number of people seeking shelter at UN peacekeepers' bases had also increased to 230,000 from 63,000. The situation was made even worse with the outbreak of a severe famine, especially in the former Unity state, which lasted for more than six months. The unchecked violence has seen war crimes and crimes against humanity committed, according to the African Union Commission of Inquiry (AU, 2016). In 2018, reports by the Mercy Corps indicate that 1 out of 3 people in South Sudan is a refugee, 1.9 million people are internally displaced, while more than 2.1 million have fled out of the country (Mercy Corps 2018). This shows an increase in the number of internally and externally displaced persons from 2 million to 4 million (Mercy Corps 2018). Also, approximately \$20 billion was spent by the UN on its peacekeeping missions in South Sudan between 2014 – 2015 with little results in terms of achieving sustainable peace (Rolandsen 2015).

This has seen South Sudan ranked the highest on the world index of fragile states that can collapse anytime. Inadequate funding was also a big challenge, too, in facing the conflict. For example, the budget needed to respond to the crisis in 2017 was \$1.64 billion, which was expected to help 7.6 million beneficiaries. However, only 73% of the total budget was financed. In 2018, the targeted budget by the UN is \$1.8 billion to help the internally displaced and \$1.7 billion to assist those who have fled the country. It is therefore pertinent to investigate the

dynamics of the South Sudan conflict with emphasis on how it poses a threat to International peace and security.

Key Objectives

1. Examine the impact of the South Sudan conflict on the humanitarian crisis.
2. Evaluate how the South Sudan conflict poses a threat to International peace and security.

Significance of the Article

The study is of immense benefit to the academic community as it contributes to existing knowledge and literature conflict, as well as provides new grounds for further research by challenging the intellect of scholars, students and researchers.

CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

The Concept of Conflict

According to Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1987), the tranquil state of nature was corrupted by human desire and greed. This implies that human selfish-interest and greed are tantamount to conflict. Additionally, Otite (2011) aver that conflict arises when persons or groups in a particular environment pursue divergent desires, interests, goals and aspirations. The occurrence of a change in the social environment, such as the discovery of new resources, normally raises fertile ground for conflict. The occurrence of conflict in any society makes it crucial for stakeholders to take conflict management as a necessary process. Through conflict management, stakeholders take steps towards enforcing a mechanism and strategic responses aimed at achieving the goals of conflict resolution as an integral part of the agenda of peaceful coexistence. Such an initiative could involve confidence-building and conflict-sensitive programmes at various levels.

Conflicts manifest themselves in various ways all over the world. While some groups struggle over resources, others struggle for power and other economic benefits, either for self-actualisation or to meet their desire for basic human needs. Some conflicts are also occasioned by an endless drama of political domination and economic oppression, especially those involving majority and minority ethnic nationalities. There is conflict when two or more people/groups clash over issues. One thing that should be noted here is that the perception of parties to any conflict has the potential to escalate or de-escalate conflicts. One feature of conflict is that it is seen as an inevitable aspect of human relationships in societies operating with social, economic and ideological differences. Globally, the origins and nature of conflict are best described or explained within the framework of human nature and a human environment (Albert et al., 1995); even in organisations, conflict is not avoidable (Okojie, 1999; Okojie, 2000). In fact, it is described as a natural experience by the human relations school of thought. There is that natural tendency in every human to feel threatened by the

activities, actions and decisions of others, especially when differing perceptions exist. The world would not have experienced such turbulence in recent times if not for human brutish nature.

Smith (2015) observes that, when there is conflict between competing groups, hostility increases while communication decreases; each group perceives the other group as the enemy and not as a neutral group. According to the early scholars in the field of conflict and conflict resolution, there are a number of schemes and sources of conflicts. Generally, the major sources of conflict include economic, value, ineffective communication and power conflict.

International Conflict

There is consensus among scholars on the inevitability of conflict in relations among human beings (Okoh 2012). Some even extol conflict as an essential creative element in human relations... the means to change... and the means by which some social values of welfare, security, justice and opportunities for personal development can be achieved (Lake and Rothchild, 2011). Nevertheless, the destructive dimensions of violent conflict cannot be left out of account, and it is generally agreed that whether or not conflict plays a positive or negative role is essentially a matter of how it is managed (Imobighe, 2007). The effectiveness or otherwise of the management of conflict is itself largely dependent on how well the causes of the conflict have been understood.

Conflict refers to contradictions arising from differences in the interests, ideas, ideologies, orientations and precipitous tendencies of the people concerned. These contradictions are inherent at all levels of social and economic interactions of the human race. It may therefore exist at the individual, group, institutional, regional, national and international levels. Conflict is thus a pervasive phenomenon in human relationships and has been seen as the basic unit for understanding social existence (Nnoli 1998).

Conflicts may have negative or positive effects. The resolution of conflicts helps to push society towards enhanced humanity. Conflicts are inevitable in human affairs, but if carefully handled, they can lead to social and economic progress. When unresolved contradictions are allowed to linger and explode into violence, however, conflict becomes undesirable and may develop into a menace. Violent conflict is therefore the consequence of the inability or failure to accommodate and resolve contradictions in society through arrangements and procedures that eliminate their negative effects and maximise their positive effect. According to Nnoli (1998), such failures result from the inability of conflicting units to accept the arrangements and procedures that have been adopted to resolve the conflict.

The Concept of Conflict Management

According to Mitchel (1981), conflict management is a new terminology of what used to be called the pacific settlement of disputes before World War II. But today, it has become broader

in scope, and it makes use of a much wider range of instruments of settlement, and many of these instruments are intergovernmental. He went on to state clearly that whereas the moribund method of settling disputes (pacific settlement) entails forceful means in totality, modern conflict management emphasises peaceful procedure in the settlement of disputes. Northege (2012) intimates that conflict management is a collection of proposed techniques ranging from the reduction of psychological abnormalities so as to release and eliminate tension inherent in them. This is the game approach to settling conflicts; although it is seldom given attention, it is an effective mechanism to resolve crises of various forms. Ikles (2014) argues that conflict management can be achieved through negotiation, consultation and mediation. He explained that negotiation is a process in which conflict proposals are put forth ostensibly for the purpose of reaching an agreement on the realisation of a common interest where conflicting interests are present.

Ofoegbu (2010) is of the conception that conflict relationships in the international system receive more attention, comment and analysis than either cooperative or competitive relationships. He avers that conflict occurs when a serious disagreement, threat, use of violence or threats of the use of violence. Despite the nature of conflict, Ofoegbu considers it a normal and almost inevitable phenomenon at all levels of human society because, as he puts it, occasions and issues of conflict always exist, which could be activated when an actor seeks a major re-distribution of values while others stay aloof. Hence, there will always be those seeking to change the status quo and hoping to maintain it. Koffi (1995) is of the contention that classical peace would be a neat solution to conflict, but if one were to restrict oneself to that, then one would be excluding the main new sources of threats. Koffi is simply emphasising peacekeeping but sees classical peacekeeping as a way out, once the crisis has taken place.

The Concept of Conflict Resolution

As a defined field of study, conflict resolution started in the 1950s and 1960s. This was at the height of the Cold War, when the development of nuclear weapons and the conflict between the superpowers seemed to threaten human survival. A group of pioneers from different disciplines saw the value of studying conflict as a general phenomenon, with similar properties whether it occurs in international relations, domestic politics, industrial relations, communities or families or between individuals (Bouldings, 2002). They saw the potential of applying approaches that were evolving in industrial relations and community mediation settings to conflicts in general, including civil and international conflicts. A handful of people in North America and Europe began to establish research groups to develop these new ideas. They were not taken very seriously. The international relations profession had its own categories for understanding international conflict and did not welcome the interlopers. Nor was the combination of analysis and practice implicit in the new ideas easy to reconcile with established scholarly institutions or the traditions of practitioners such as diplomats and politicians (Bouldings, 2002). Nevertheless, the new ideas attracted interest, and the field began to grow and spread. Scholarly journals in conflict resolution were created. Institutions to study the field were established, and their number rapidly increased (Boulding, 2002). The field developed its

own subdivisions, with different groups studying international crises, internal wars, social conflicts and approaches ranging from negotiation and mediation to experimental games.

Kelman and Fisher (2003) noted that by the 1980s, conflict resolution ideas were increasingly making a difference in real conflicts. In South Africa, for example, the Centre for Intergroup Studies was applying the approaches that had emerged in the field to the developing confrontation between apartheid and its challengers, with impressive results. In the Middle East, a peace process was getting underway in which negotiators on both sides had gained experience both of each other and of conflict resolution through problem-solving workshops. In Northern Ireland, groups inspired by the new approach had set up community relations initiatives that were not only reaching across community divides but were also becoming an accepted responsibility of local government (Kelman and Fisher, 2003).

The Concept of Peacekeeping

James (2012) sees peacekeeping as those operations which are non-military in nature, resting on the formal consent of at least one of the parties for the establishment and continuation. James's definition better suits peacekeeping rather than that of peacekeeping, since the operation, according to him, should be non-military in nature. However, his definition brings out the dimension that the operation should be based on the consent of at least one of the parties to the conflict. Hammarskjöld was one of those who, as the Secretary General of the UN, popularised this concept by bringing it into the limelight in the international system. He sees peacekeeping (in his doctrine of Prevention Diplomacy) as a means of preventing engagement or facilitating disengagement on the part of their superpowers, when and where they are rational enough to see the advantage of actually standing back or stepping aside (from a conflict) (Cordia and Foote, 2013). In a summary work which he submitted to the General Assembly in 1958, he outlined the nature and functions of the UN peacekeeping forces, which according to him, should not be coercive but should carry any action that might suggest that they are supporting any of the parties to the conflict, that having special interest in the conflict and the permanent members of the Security Council should be generally fenced out or excluded from the peacekeeping mission.

The International Dictionary of Politics, edited by Walter Raymond, sees peacekeeping as a term used for combat-ready military units, assigned by member states of the UN for the purpose of overseeing cease-fire violations among warring states or serving as a buffer bloc between two or more belligerents. According to him, once a cease-fire has been assured, the political climate will become more conducive for diplomatic negotiations and possible settlement through direct diplomacy by the Secretary-General or some other third party. From the foregoing, it is very clear that the concept of peacekeeping has no generally accepted definition. What we can observe from the various definitions proffered by commentators is that there are two views of peacekeeping operations. The first view gives the impression that peacekeeping involves the use of military force to secure a cease-fire in a crisis, which could threaten international peace and security. In the opinion of James (2012), it is essentially an ad hoc

mechanism which, while it reflects the breakdown of the charter plan for tough collective security, cannot be positively related to any long-term trend, either within or outside the United Nations.

It is rather an example of how the organisation can be used from time to time to help deal with a crisis in which impartial third-party involvement is seen as desirable and where other institutions or devices are most suitable. This type of mechanism was used by the UN in the Congo crisis of 1960, the Cyprus in 1964, and in the Middle East crisis of 1973. One would see this mechanism as the proper meaning of peacekeeping. Any of the parties to the crisis or both, or a third party, could initiate the measure. The second type, which may well be termed peacekeeping and which best suits the intention of the UN charter, comes under the category of observation. This, according to Wiseman (2014), involves the deployment of a small number of troops to stop a maximum of 600, designated only to observe and report any violation of a cease-fire of hostilities. This method has a long period of historical application. It was the method introduced by the United Nations after the 1947 war between India and Pakistan and in the Middle East after the Arab-Israel war of 1948. Whether peacekeeping or peacemaking, the concept has proved helpful in the UN system in the management of international crises and, as a result, has evolved into some basic principles and practices.

Being an impartial third party, it stands between two belligerents and keeps them at bay. In other words, it is a neutral body. The forces should not side with any of the parties to the dispute; otherwise, the spirit or the intention of the peacekeeping operation will be defeated. Thirdly, a peacekeeping operation is a “non-enforceable measure”. In other words, it is not intended or designed to be a fighting force to impose its will on the parties to the conflict, except in the case of self-defence and under direct attack. The consent of any of the parties to the dispute or both must be sought before the peacekeeping force is deployed, in which case an agreement must be reached between the host country and the body sending the peacekeeping forces. The agreement is expected to detail the “modus operandi” of the forces. The fourth principle concerns the issue of compositions of the forces and financial obligations. In this regard, the host country reserves the right to reject or accept a potential contributor to the forces for example; Israel once rejected the participation of the Polish troops in the United National Emergency Force (UNEF) in the Sinai and in the UNIFIL on the Golan Heights, but instead insisted on their participation in which case, the Israelis did not allow the Polish troops to enter Israeli-held territory (Cordia and Foote, 2013).

There is the view that the peacekeeping forces should be composed of units from the middle and small powers to the exclusion of the permanent members of the Security Council, because any of these members could use their powers in the council to influence the activities of the peacekeeping forces. This principle, however, can be obtained only in the peacekeeping operation being organised by the UN. The fifth principle maintains that the composition of the forces should have an adequate geographic representation from the East, West and the third world countries. This provision, however, contradicts the above, which says that the permanent members of the Security Council should be excluded from the composition of the forces

(Cordia and Foote, 2013). Closely linked to the principle of composition of the UN peacekeeping force is the issue of principle of financing the operation. The UN is expected to finance the operation and reimburse the countries which finance their own forces, but unfortunately, most states do not pay their peacekeeping assessment, which makes it difficult for the UN to effectively carry out its obligation to the whole peacekeeping operations. There is also the principle of command and control of peacekeeping forces. The constant disagreement among the five permanent members of the Security Council, who are charged by the UN charter to manage the military affairs, has made the issue an impractical one. There have been a lot of controversies over the command and control of the operations.

The Concept of Peace-building

The idea of peace-building can be traced to the work of Johan Galtung in his essay *Three Approaches to Peace: Peacekeeping, Peacemaking, and Peace-building*. Galtung called for the creation of peace-building structures to promote sustainable peace by addressing the root causes of violent conflict and supporting indigenous capacities for peace management and conflict resolution (Johan, 1976). The concept gained currency in peace studies and among practitioners of conflict transformation in the following decades, but its widespread acceptance had to await the end of the Cold War. Bernardo (2010) noted that at the UN, “peace-building” came to the forefront of intergovernmental debates with Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali’s landmark report *An Agenda for Peace* (1992). This identified post-conflict peace-building as one of a series of tools at the UN’s disposal following preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peacekeeping.

Encompassing a wide range of activities, peace-building was defined by the UN General Assembly as post-conflict action to identify and support structures which tend to strengthen and solidify peace to avoid a relapse into conflict (UN General Assembly, 2008). Since 1992, numerous documents have helped refine the UN’s understanding of peace-building. Robert et al (2013) noted that as the concept of peace-building gained momentum, different parts of the UN revised or expanded their operations to respond to the changing nature of contemporary conflicts. The tragic consequences of failed peace agreements in the 1990s (e.g. Angola), renewed conflicts (e.g. Haiti and Rwanda) and protracted wars (e.g. Afghanistan, Sudan, DRC) highlighted the need for the UN to develop new approaches to the challenges of building sustainable peace in complex emergencies and intra-state conflicts (UN, 2007).

The emergence of multidimensional peace operations, the creation of new conflict units (e.g. UNDP/BCPR) and the design of new service lines (e.g. SSR, DDR and the rule of law) demonstrated the converging interest among humanitarian, development, political, security and human rights actors to help prevent and resolve conflict and to build sustainable peace (Bernardo, 2010). Relapse into violence in Haiti and Timor-Leste following UN interventions there reinforced the need for carefully planned, well-coordinated exit strategies to prevent relapses and to lay the foundations for sustainable peace (UN, 2007).

In 2000, the Brahimi Report defined peace-building as activities undertaken on the far side of conflict to reassemble the foundations of peace and provide the tools for building on those foundations, something that is more than just the absence of war. The UN's understanding of peace-building has continued to evolve ever since. The Secretary-General's Policy Committee has described peace-building thus: Peace-building involves a range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management, and to lay the foundations for sustainable peace and development (UN, 2007). Ashraf and Clare (2008) stated that peace-building strategies must be coherent and tailored to the specific needs of the country concerned, based on national ownership, and should comprise a carefully prioritised, sequenced, and therefore relatively narrow set of activities aimed at achieving the above objectives.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Realist theory

The realist theory derives its impulse from the perspective that the nature of man is sinful and conflictual. Realism holds that political theory must flow from observation of history and experience of people and of nation-states and that these show a pattern of violent and aggressive behaviour (Richard and Sinclair, 1996). Thus, the highest moral duty of the nation-state is its own preservation. To accomplish this, states must utilise power. According to Morgenthau (cited in Alfred, 1978, p.57), "the interest of the nation-state defined in terms of power, is the main moral guide in which policies are developed, but prudence in pursuing that interest is the primary ethical guide for policy makers. In the world of power politics, states must increase their power to guarantee their survival. Thus, the forces that influenced the war were political. The quest by political elites in South Sudan to actualise their political interest necessitated the conflict. The realist theory of international relations is appropriate as our theoretical framework, as it explains the rationale behind the South Sudan conflict.

Methodology

The methodology adopted here is a descriptive design based on content analysis. It was employed in analysing, describing and interpreting data since it is predominantly a desk research, which means data was sourced basically from secondary sources. Through the content analysis, the paper arrived at the following findings and conclusions.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Impact of the South Sudan Conflict on the Humanitarian Crisis

The conflict in South Sudan has raised a serious humanitarian crisis; refugee/ social displacement crisis, food insecurity, high inflation rate, loss of lives, gender base violence and

disruption in education, amongst others. On the refugee crisis, reports by Mercy Corps Group indicated that 1 out of 3 people in South Sudan is a refugee, 1.9 million people are internally displaced, while more than 2.1 million fled out of the country between 2015-2018 (Mercy Corps 2018). The group also reported targeted attacks on civilians, gender-based violence, including rape, burning of homes and livestock, murder and kidnapping during the period (Mercy Corps 2018).

The South Sudan conflict has led to the social displacement of many Sudanese. In 2017, four years into the war, the UNHCR (2018) reported that the number of displaced persons had increased to over 2.3 million people, as renewed fighting was taking place in the Equatorials, Western Bahr al Ghazal and the Greater Upper Nile, causing the death of thousands more. The number of people seeking shelter at UN peacekeepers' bases increased to 230,000 from 63,000 (UNHCR, 2018). The UN announced that thousands of people had sought refuge within the UN's compounds. Two Indian peacekeepers were killed helping to protect 36 civilians in Akobo, Jonglei, when they were attacked by about 2,000 armed Nuer youths. The attackers were apparently intending to kill the civilians sheltering at the UN base, in a move condemned by the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (UNHCR, 2018). About 200 employees of petroleum operators, of which the three largest were China National Petroleum Corp, ONGC Videsh and Petronas, sought refuge at a UN compound in Bentiu. This followed the deaths of 16 such workers, five workers at a field in Unity State on 18 December and another 11 at the Thar Jath field the next day (UNHCR, 2018).

On agriculture, South Sudan is rich in arable land and water resources; the residual impacts of conflict prevent the region from producing to its full potential. According to the 2018 Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission (CFSAM) report, conflict was the major factor influencing national food security during the period of violence from 2013 to 2018. The report stated that in the initial stages, conflict was more localised and mainly affected the Greater Upper Nile Region (Upper Nile, Unity, and Jonglei). Then in mid-2016, conflict intensified and spread into the major producing regions, including Western Equatoria, Central Equatoria, parts of Eastern Equatoria, and Western Bahr el Ghazal (CFSAM, 2018).

SOUTH SUDAN CONFLICT AS A THREAT TO INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY

The government is facing the challenge of weapon proliferation in the hands of civilians. Years of conflict with the north and additional civil conflict after independence enabled civilians to acquire weapons and ammunition. Weapons in the hands of civilians have often pushed the conflict further, especially through acts of retaliation. As such, a comprehensive disarmament process has to be conducted so that the widespread access to weapons by civilians is minimised. Heavy penalties and punishments need to be stipulated under the law for anyone found culpable of violating peace agreements through the assistance of international and regional organisations such as the UN and AU. The significance of professionalising the army cannot be emphasised

more. Security agencies and the Department of Defence need to be strengthened through suitable training of officers on human rights. Additionally, military or security officers found culpable of gross misconduct or human rights violations, such as sexual crimes, must be arrested and prosecuted. To attain this level of responsibility, the judiciary should be adequately staffed with adequate access to financial and material resources for the recruitment of sufficient judicial staff. Additionally, women's representation in the judiciary should be promoted, and recruitment must be based on meritocracy, with expertise on gender-based and sexual crimes as an added advantage during recruitment drives.

Unfortunately, the state-building process in South Sudan is threatened by weak institutional arrangements between various arms of government, thereby interfering with the effective implementation of the peace agreement. This problem is further expounded by the tendencies of foreign donors to deal with specific institutions, such as departments, rather than facilitate and develop cross-departmental collaboration. Years of conflict have detached citizens from the government. To many, the government in itself has been the cause of all the violence and destruction. As such, many civilians do consider the existing government as illegitimate and one that cannot adequately address their views. It is therefore imperative that the government needs to incorporate citizens in the formulation of government policy in accordance with internationally recognised practices of good governance. This will ensure that government policy is an initiative of the people. Building a culture of public participation in decision-making processes may have a direct impact on the socio-political and economic development of South Sudan. Civil society and the media are central to the success of citizen participation in government. More importantly, the government needs to embed a new understanding of statehood by revisiting the philosophical underpinnings of the state as construed on Westphalian assumptions. The peace deals proposed have been heavily influenced by Hobbesian arguments that emphasise the relevance of central authority to create order and ensure a long and good life.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

1. It was observed in the course of the study that despite several peace agreements being signed, there were still weak support systems. The institutional bodies established to ensure the smooth implementation of the peace agreements had often fallen short of their mandate due to operational and institutional challenges that hindered them from operating efficiently.
2. The ever-visible military influence in state affairs has been further supported by the laxity of previous peace agreements to accommodate non-state actors in the transition period, and to train ethnic militias adopted into the national army for their new role.
3. More importantly, both government and opposition military forces hold extreme positions – the latter calling for the removal of the president and opposing the inclusion of opposition political leaders in the government.

CONCLUSION

The work concludes that the causes of the South Sudan war are mainly based on power struggle, natural wealth resources, corruption, ethnicity, lack of justice and human rights violations, mismanagement of the economy and weak institutional capacity, amongst others. Unfortunately, the ramifications of conflict in South Sudan are by far unimaginable. Among the many factors mentioned, three major ones, namely: political, economic and humanitarian consequences, are the very significant ones. The cycle of conflict and violation of several peace agreements is a testament that previous agreements did not account for the unique features of South Sudan. Ethnicity, marginalisation, disarmament and absence of functional institutions continue to hamper post-conflict peace-building processes.

Even though there is a general perception that rebel groups are illegitimate, some represent genuine grievances of communities. Because of such concerns, this article emphasises that, provided there is no comprehensive approach to political processes in peace building, dispensing government positions will only be a temporary solution to conflicts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. There is a need to draft a new constitution for the country that will require the establishment of a political and economic system that guarantees every South Sudanese equity and equality.
2. The politics of winner takes all should be ruled out, while the separation of powers between the executive, judiciary, legislature and the local government must be strengthened. Division of labour among the various security forces must be emphasised so that they are divorced from politics.
3. There is a need for the international community and transitional government to collaborate in providing finance and organising activities such as cultural events that build on shared interests. Taking a lead in organising and financing activities that provide a platform to highlight issues and problems that affect society, such as corruption and ethnicity, without having to mention names or groups

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