

SOUTH SUDAN

Ethnic violence and peacekeeping

CONFLICT REPORT

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Issue overview

The CBAP Conflict Report, whose second issue you are currently reading, is a biannual publication aiming to provide on-point information about problems relevant to the selected conflict. Every issue of the Conflict Report will focus on specific aspects of a selected armed conflict raging around the world, analyse them and offer insight into their inner and outer dynamics.

In this regard, the presented issue offers three texts providing an insight into ethnical violence in South Sudan. The first article, by Petra Melová and Klára Mrázková, addresses the question of Nuer White Army as a model example of motivations for ethnical violence in South Sudan. Then, the piece by Karolína Karásková and Zuzana Špinderová looks into the UN peacekeeping effectiveness vis-à-vis casualties in South Sudan civil war. Finally, Jakub Kuchar and Adriána Oboňová's work analyses the levels of discourse regarding the ethnic violence in South Sudan.

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Nuer White Army as a model example of motivations for ethnic violence in South Sudan

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Introduction

Being one of the most devastating violent struggles nowadays, the war in South Sudan has gained considerable media coverage. With tens of thousands of casualties, and number of displaced persons counted in millions, it ranks itself scale-wise amongst the Syria/Iraq and Burma wars. The conflict, however, operates on a singularly ethnic framework. Around NUMBER of ethnic groups residing in South Sudan find themselves in a daily reality of competition and war, resulting in hostilities, theft, child kidnapping, rape, and ethnic cleansing. In order to understand the underlying motivations of the many participants to this conflict, this paper puts forward a comparative analysis of two instances of a major violent behaviour by a Nuer White Army (NWA) group, on which the arguments regarding the motivations of the conflict participants are highlighted. Since the literature on the ongoing South Sudanese Civil War (SSCW) is scarce, we have decided to base our analysis on the field research of NWA made by John Young, which we would like to acknowledge and further promote in this way.

Method

This short study occupies itself with a single question: "What is the root cause for the ethnical violence in South Sudan?"

In order to give a satisfactory answer, an analysis that ventures beyond the boundaries of an independent South Sudan is necessary: the conflict in its current state may not offer enough hints for us to find the roots of the trouble. Rather, looking at the timeline of the struggles from the vantage point of the preceding conflict may provide an insight into the causes of the current one.

With the current state of the conflict, number of actors, and lack of tools and viable data, it is virtually impossible for us to articulate a comprehensive analysis, which would encompass all of the local, regional, and international forces taking part in the events. Thus, the decision to focus on a single actor, which will prove to be representative of the lowest level of the conflict has been made.

By combining the two aspects, a small time-lapse of one of the groups will be crafted, based on two major events - each characteristic of the group's behaviour at the time. By a comparison of these two events and their contexts, a question of change or stability can be answered. In this way, we will arrive to a solution to the posed problem, since we will be able to point out whether the current conflict follows established patterns, whether it does not, or whether it has changed on the surface, but still follows previously identified motivations.

NWA provides a solid grounding for such a research, since: it represents one of the major ethnic groups, it has played a significant role in the conflict throughout the decades, it interacts with the other groups regularly, and its' structure may give an insight into the tribal organisation at the local level. The fact that our assumptions can be based on an actual field research gives even further intention to analyse NWA specifically. For these purposes, two publications by John Young mapping the NWA on two different occasions will be used.

Studied instances of the major violence are the two attacks on Bor, capital of the Jonglei state, undertaken by the forces predominantly composed of NWA fighters, on November 15, 1991, and on December 17, 2013. These events will be compared in a heuristic manner, based on the findings of John Young and arguments presented in this chapter, focusing on the motivation rather than on execution or other security related variables.

Context

South Sudan is currently the youngest country in the world, gaining its independence on July 9, 2011, while being admitted to the United Nations (UN) four days later. What seemed to be a way of solving a lengthy internal conflict between the south and the central government in Khartoum, soon proved to be a catalyst of an even deeper divide: with confessional differences now being taken out of the picture, the tribes became pitted against each other with renewed vigour. Signs of this trend could have been seen throughout the duration of internal conflicts in former Sudan: during the Second Sudanese Civil War (2SCW), one of the prominent dissent figures, Samuel Gai Tut, came into

disagreement with John Garang, predecessor of Salva Kiir, regarding the leadership of Anyanya II - a group from which Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) originated - in the early 1970's.¹ Rivalries between the two main actors of the current political crisis, President Salva Kiir - an ethnic Dinka - and leader of the opposition Riek Machar - an ethnic Nuer - go way back as well: in 1991, Machar alongside the other opposition figures established a splinter faction of SPLM - SPLM-Nasir - in order to defy Garang's hegemony over the original SPLM. SPLM-Nasir soon became sponsored by the Khartoum regime, in a war against the common enemy.² Since Salva Kiir is a direct successor to John Garang, utilising much of his authoritarian approach to power consolidation, a conflict between him and Machar was imminent. Following the 2013 events, Machar became the leader of a newly shaped organization, successor to the SPLM-Nasir: Sudan People's Liberation Movement in Opposition (SPLM-IO), the main opposition to the current Government of South Sudan.

As to why such strong division lines between the various ethnicities of South Sudanese exist, that not even a common enemy in Khartoum could have prevented the splitting and in-fighting amongst the regime's opposition, we need to look further into the past: to the period of British colonization of Africa. In order to prevent the spread of Islam and other competing influences, British administration chose to keep the area currently representing South Sudan decentralized and divided among the tribal

¹ Daniel Wuor Joak's biography of Samuel Gai Tut may be found [here](#).

² Young, John. "A fractious rebellion inside the SPLM-IO." Small Arms Survey (2015) p. 10-12.

lines on a local level. Coupled with Christianization, this allowed for a strong policy protecting the empire's holdings against undesired pressures.³ But today, when South Sudan struggles to find a common identity, the consequences of this approach can prove to be fatal for the young nation.

The current conflict was sparked by the National Liberation Council meeting on the December 15, 2013, when Kiir's power consolidation within the SPLM that started in July of the same year, resulted in a political crisis, when Machar and other high SPLM officials refused to take part in the proceedings, unless their agenda proposals were taken into account. The tensions were then passed on to the army deployments, following the Dinka-Nuer ethnic division, and the fighting in Juba started soon after the convention.

Nuer White Army

The group is characterized by its' organic and decentralized structure, relying on the institution of a *cattle-camp*.⁴ Pastoralist lifestyle reflecting the importance of the cattle dictates the lives of the Nuer people - inhabitants of the Upper Nile region, found in the northeast part of the country, bordering Ethiopia. Grazing and protection of the herds is delegated to the male members of the tribe, who spend their time in the outposts outside of their villages, taking care of the cows. The reliance on this resource is widespread in South Sudan, with

³ Rudincová, Kateřina. "The Right to Self-determination or Inviolability of Borders in the Horn of Africa? The African Union Approach." In *Unrecognized States and Secession in the 21st Century*, pp. 187-203. Springer, Cham (2017)

⁴ Young, John. "The White Army: an introduction and overview." Small Arms Survey (2007) p. 12

existential factors such as the lack of grazing land shaping the relations between various ethnicities and clans. Nuers base significant part of their identity on courage and bravery, which the young warriors try to prove in combat. Cattle raids and looting are common, following a tit-for-tat tactics in relationship to their neighbours (notably the Murle), as well as within various clans of the Nuer themselves, making a constant armed guard to the cattle necessary. This means that the Nuer possess a considerable standing force, which is centered around the *cattle-camp* institution, readily deployed whenever the decision to do so is made in the horizontal decision-making structure.

The adjective "white" in the name of NWA is generally said to have origins in the way the Nuer paint themselves with ash, creating the desired colour effect. However, Young disputes this, while pointing out that the adjective is used solely in a connotative manner of Light versus Dark, where the NWA stands in opposition to the regular, "black" forces.⁵

Combat prowess of NWA is emphasized by their military successes, being largely employed by the SPLM-IO forces, with NWA overshadowing the regular opposition units in their ability to stably capture major government objectives garrisoned by the SPLA - as long as these are not heavily fortified.⁶ This is even underscored by the lack of modern weapons at their disposal and utilization of a simple swarming tactics.⁷ The fierceness of the NWA troops in combat has resulted in a very negative narrative,

⁵ Young, John. "Popular struggles and elite co-optation: the Nuer White Army in South Sudan's civil war." Small Arms Survey (2016) p. 13

⁶ Ibid. p. 46

⁷ Ibid. p. 45-46

depicting them as ruthless or outright cruel, which is also one of the reasons for the voiced human rights violation allegations against this group. The fact that the NWA warriors do not take prisoners, while being subject to a strict battle regimen themselves, amplifies this fearful perception of NWA even more: "[...] fighters did appear fearless in battle, no emotions were displayed in the face of the deaths of comrades, and fighters' deaths were simply announced to their families by a couple of gunshots outside their homes."⁸ Allegations of abuses during the SSCW are answered in a similarly shocking, but simple logic: if the people stayed in an area previously targeted by Dinka, they must be sided with them, and thus the violence is justified - otherwise, they would flee from the abuse.⁹ The logic behind the reported behaviour considering sexual violence goes even further, far beyond possible rational explanation: "[...] elders told the fighters that if they raped women they would be cursed or die in battle, and although [...] rapes had been committed, the perpetrators had been punished by their deaths in the same battle."¹⁰

Comparison

Both of the selected major acts of violence by the NWA are characteristic of the periods they took place in and of the conflicts that they were a part of. On both of the occasions, the NWA was co-opted by the SPLM-IO armed forces, thus giving the attacks an overarching political disposition, while Machar played a bigger or lesser role in both of them. Machar's motivations remained uniform, always targeting a political adversary represented by SPLM

⁸ Ibid. p. 13

⁹ Ibid. p. 41

¹⁰ Ibid. p. 41-42

leadership - John Garang in 1991 and Salva Kiir in 2013 - in a strategic sense, hoping to gain specific benefits. Both of the attacks targeted the Bor settlement, located in the south-western part of Jonglei state, and its' Dinka population.

1991 Attack

The assault on the Bor Dinka was from Machar's strategical viewpoint a way of pointing out Garang's incapability of protecting his own people, so close to the capital, and thus challenging his leadership position.¹¹ Even though the SPLM-Nasir celebrated a short-lived military victory, the plan backfired horribly, since the scale of the civilian abuse that took place barred Machar from taking over the leadership role that was occupied by Garang at the time. NWA, on the other hand, obtained large amounts of wealth - mainly in cattle - and successfully fulfilled its traditional objectives. For NWA at the time, this was an attack of the usual motivation, but of an unusual scale, made possible by siding with a strategically superior ally. In his later work, Young cites revenge as being one of the motivations as well, namely the deaths of the Nuer leaders of Anyanya II at the hands of the SPLA, controlled by the Dinka.¹² However, said killings took place almost a decade before the incident, and Young does not provide a further explanation of this narrative - although, the especially heinous treatment to which the body of Samuel Gai Tut was post-mortem¹³ subjected suggests that a reaction

¹¹ Young, John. *The White Army: an introduction and overview.* Small Arms Survey (2007) p. 12

¹² Young, John. *Popular struggles and elite co-optation: the Nuer White Army in South Sudan's civil war.* Small Arms Survey (2016) p. 21

¹³ One account refers to 50 lashes delivered to the dead body, while other speaks of daily

in the form of deeply running resentment may have been very likely to be present in the Nuer community.

2013 Attack

Events from the December 2013 follow a different logic: Young's findings point to the spontaneity of the initial gathering of the fighters, who took up arms in order to enact vengeance on the Dinka, as well as to protect their relatives in the government areas, which they feared to be in danger as well.¹⁴ This is contrary to the premeditated manner of the 1991 attack, even though the complete context may have been fully understood solely by the SPLM-IO orchestrators. Nuer, who felt to be the victims of unchecked governmental abuse, decided to retaliate in the same manner, as they perceived the SPLA to go about their business: based solely on ethnicity, and without exception.¹⁵ NWA fighters state the revenge as the primary reason for the civilian abuse that took place in Bor.¹⁶ Young states that throughout the duration of the conflict, the fighters started to develop political consciousness and began to view the conflict in a broader manner, while also pointing out the fact, that the fighters are willing to continue the fight unless Kiir is deposed of his presidential office, regardless of the ceasefire agreements and possible peace accords struck by the SPLM-IO leadership.¹⁷

Conclusion

lashings up until the point of its ultimate decomposition.

¹⁴ Young, John. "Popular struggles and elite co-optation: the Nuer White Army in South Sudan's civil war." Small Arms Survey (2016) p. 28

¹⁵ Ibid. p. 41-42

¹⁶ Ibid. p. 41

¹⁷ Ibid. p. 35, 49-51

The comparison of the selected major acts of violence by the NWA points out a common denominator, which is revenge springing from the ethnical hatred. Although looting and cattle rustling is common, it is not the reason for the 2013 deployments. The attack on Bor from 1991 may suggest that a deep rift in the relationships of Nuer and Dinka was caused as a direct consequence of it, culminating into the 2013 events. However, the 1991 attack was already based on a hatred of the Nuer towards the Dinka, and vice-versa.¹⁸

We must thus, unfortunately, join John Young in his prospect of the conflict never going to be solved solely on a political level, amongst the handful of high-level figures.¹⁹ A large scale reconstruction project that encompasses the society as a whole must be undertaken, in order to fight the deeply rooted emotions causing the conflict. A conflict resolution based on the lines of the resource scarcity approaches²⁰ may be a way of disposing of the most common trigger for quarrels.²¹ Promoting sportsmanship over armed squabbles could provide a way of allowing rivalries in a non-destructive manner, while respecting the need to prove ones virtue and upholding the tribal honour. Wrestling, for example, is proving to be capable of facilitating such needs, while also

¹⁸ Young, John. "The White Army: an introduction and overview." Small Arms Survey (2007) p. 12

¹⁹ Young, John. "Popular struggles and elite co-optation: the Nuer White Army in South Sudan's civil war." Small Arms Survey (2016) p. 56

²⁰ See for example Philippe Le Billon's *The political ecology of war: natural resources and armed conflicts*, or *Resource Scarcity and Conflict in Developing Countries* by John W. Maxwell and Rafael Reuveny.

²¹ This view is also supported by the recent findings of UNMISS, available [here](#).

being able to bring together different communities as spectators in a popular leisure activity.

The colonial approach of divide and conquer desperately needs one thing a unified South Sudan could never provide: an impartial conqueror, indifferent to the motivations of the divided. A leader of the united South Sudan must transcend not only the traditional cleavages, but also - and most crucially - has to put aside his own tribal legacy, in order to represent all.

UN peacekeeping effectiveness vis-à-vis causalities in South Sudanese civil war

Karolina Karásková & Zuzana Špinderová

Introduction

The civil war in South Sudan and the related United Nations' (UN) activities have made the headlines of world newspapers on regular basis, mainly due to the ethnic violence by a myriad of actors and attempts of the international community at stemming its worst consequences.

However, as is common with the UN missions in general, the effectiveness of the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) in limiting the suffering wars has been put to question. This article will examine this issue, attempting to provide a quantitative point of view on the success or failure of both the peace process in general and UNMISS in particular.

Method

Obviously, the question of peacekeeping effectiveness has been examined and re-examined time and time again, putting stress on different factors such as the maintenance of peace after the end of the mission or the conduct of the UN peacekeepers. This study will focus on the UNMISS mandate and how it has been fulfilling it for the duration of the independence of the country. Specifically, the mandate directly claims that its intents are to aid the peace process, protect the civilian population and monitor the implementation of ceasefire.

From this perspective, it can be argued that in general the main focus of the UNMISS should be to lower the number of civilian

deaths in combat situations as such, while also contributing to lowering the number of hostilities and combat deaths in general.

In order to understand how this mandate has been implemented over the course of the last decade, the paper looks at three key indicators in monthly intervals for the years 2011-2017. Firstly, the number of deployed personnel that is available to the UNMISS¹. This indicator should stand on the "inputs" side of the effectiveness logic, showing what the international community has invested in fulfilling the goals of the engagement. Secondly, the number of all battle related deaths² will be examined, which should contribute to the understanding of whether there has been a change towards a peaceful interaction in the South Sudanese society. Finally, the overall number of civilian deaths in combat should show how one of the main goals defined in the mandate has been achieved over time.

Furthermore, the main milestones of the peace process³ will be considered as well, to discover, whether they affect any of the

¹ "Troop and Police Contributors Peacekeeping." United Nations. 2018. Accessed July 07, 2018. <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/troop-and-police-contributors>.

² "Uppsala Conflict Data Program." UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia. 2018. Accessed July 07, 2018. www.ucdp.uu.se

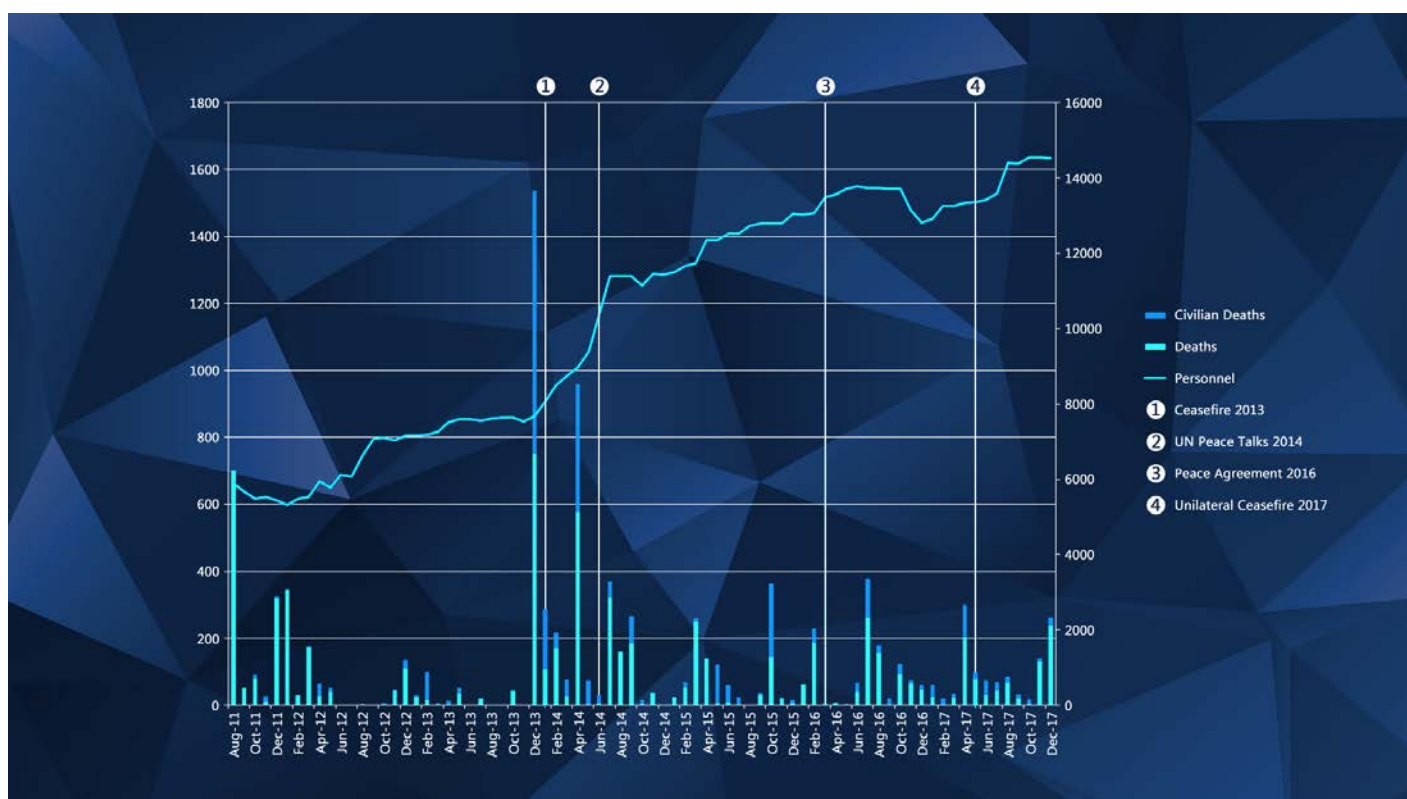
³ "South Sudan Profile - Timeline." BBC News. June 01, 2018. Accessed July 07, 2018. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14019202>.

other three indicators. From this perspective, any forms of ceasefire and peace talks will be considered as a mile stone.

Analysis

The aforementioned indicators are plotted against each other in the following chart. The non-civilian battle related deaths (blue) and the civilian battle related deaths (green) are displayed as the stack bar chart, while the development of the number of the UNMISS personnel (red) is plotted as a line chart.

exceeded the original. The most rapid increase during the examined period started in November 2013 and lasted until the November of the last year. During this time the peacekeeping force rose from 7536 to 11451 persons. The following years saw major, albeit much more periodic, strengthening of the mission’s personnel, with the exception of decline between October 2016 and January 2017. This resulted in the final number of 14528 soldiers available for the mission in December 2017.



From the perspective of the number of deployed personnel, the chart clearly shows a massive increase during more or less the entire period. The transition from UNMIS to UMISS allowed the mission to start its operations with almost 5884 persons in August 2011. The following months – September 2011 to January 2012 – saw gradual decrease in personnel. This trend was reversed starting from April 2012, in which the number of soldiers first time

Overall, the increase in the examined period was almost 250%.

The second indicator tells a somewhat different story. During the first months of South Sudanese independence the number of deaths was rather high – peaking at 700 in August 2011, significantly decreasing in the three following months, only to rise again in December 2011 (326) and January 2012 (346). However, the intensity of the conflictual relations sharply fell from these numbers,

with the exception of March 2012 with 177 deaths, and the battle related deaths were kept at or below 50 essentially until December 2012. This month, followed by February 2013 the battle related deaths spiked to over 100 before falling again far below 50 for the next months. The number of deaths soared in December 2013 to 1536 deaths following the dismissal of Riek Machar from the position of the vice-president⁴. The deaths fell considerably after December 2013, but were still significant with another sharp increase in April 2014 to 960 from March's 76. The situation calmed down in May and June, with 73 and 29 deaths respectively but intensified again in July (370), August (161) and September (267). This type of fluctuation with some months of relative calm followed by months of increased hostilities remained constant for the rest of period, with deaths reaching up to 378 (July 2016) and averaging 92 deaths per month, with median of 60.

Regarding the number and the ratio of civilian deaths, it has to be said that situation was majorly worsened December 2013 onwards. While the civilian battle related deaths had been present even before, they almost never reached beyond 20 and exceeded this number only three times – April 2012 (37), December 2012 (25) and February 2013 (85). The average number of civilian deaths was 9, with median sitting at 3. The average proportion of civilian on overall deaths was 31%. After December 2013 the number of civilian deaths increased sharply – with six occasions of casualties reaching above 100 deaths. These were December

⁴ "Profile: South Sudan Rebel Leader Riek Machar." Al Jazeera. 2014. Accessed July 07, 2018. <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/2013/12/profile-south-sudan-riek-machar-20131230201534595392.html>.

2013 (786), January (177) and April 2014 (384), May (113) and October 2015 (218) and July 2016 (116). The average of civilian deaths increased to 56 per month, with median of 21. The average proportion of civilian deaths on total deaths increased to 37%. During the examined period there were four milestones in the peace process, which however did not necessarily lead to a significant stabilisation.

What can be inferred from the presented data? First of all, there has been an obvious increase in manpower over the whole period. According to the available data on the financial aspects of the operation, this was also true for the overall budget⁵. Secondly, apart from the spike in 2013, the number of battle related deaths was almost constant during the entire period. However, it is necessary to say, that the intensity of hostilities never returned to the aforementioned period in 2013 and 2014. Thirdly, the number of civilian deaths has substantially increased after 2013 and remained relatively high during the entire examined period. Finally, all attempts at cessation of fighting were unsuccessful; nonetheless, both the ceasefire in 2013 and start of the UN peace talks appear to have at least limited the violence.

Conclusions

This short quantitative study set out to answer the question of effectiveness of the UNMISS peacekeepers to achieve the goals defined in their mandate, specifically, the goal of protection of civilians. Unfortunately, according to the presented data on the

⁵ All the relevant documents for historical UNMISS budgets are available from the website in the following citation. "UNMISS Peacekeeping." United Nations. 2018. Accessed July 07, 2018. <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/mission/unmiss>.

battle-related deaths it can be assumed that these goals were achieved only partially, if at all. While, as said before, it is true that the high casualties numbers from later 2013 and earlier 2014 did not re-occur with the strengthened presence of the UNMISS, the number and ratio of civilian deaths increased significantly since the outset of South Sudanese independence. Furthermore, even the overall amount of battle-related deaths generally did not fall under the numbers present in South Sudan in 2011.

From the perspective of the peace process, it also appears that the four mentioned milestones had immediate effect, which however did not translate to long-term limitation of hostilities.

It is possible to speculate, in accordance with findings in other sections of this report, that while the political level of South Sudan played a role in the rise in hostilities, it is possible that this level is not the only cause of the civil war. Even though the number of battle related deaths saw immediate declines after every iteration of peace talks, there was never a complete cessation of hostilities. This can imply that not all warring parties are actually controlled by the political level and that in reality there are more conflicts occurring along each other. This would also at least partly explain the inability of the UN peacekeepers to stop the fighting and protect the civilians, as the overall aim of the mission could have been overtly focused on the political level while being unable to deal with lower level conflicts stemming from different actors and different grievances.

Finally, another interesting speculation, requiring further research, can be the apparent cycle of hostilities with two or three months of heightened tensions followed by

several months of relative calm. In this regard, it is possible to say that this might be related to specific weather conditions, which are linked to the grazing habits of the relevant actors in the conflict. While this is obviously just a speculation, the occurrence of the higher number of deaths around the late spring and summer in the last three years (2015-2017), can provide at least a certain degree of justification for future research.

All in all, it can be said that even though UNMISS provided certain degree of stability in terms of preventing out of hand hostilities that happened in 2013 and 2014, its effectiveness in protecting the civilians and contributing to the peace process was limited, possibly due to its ignorance of other levels of conflict and also relevant societal factors specific to South Sudan.

Levels of discourse regarding the ethnic violence in South Sudan

Jakub Kuchar & Adriana Oboňová

Introduction

South Sudanese Civil War (SSCW) has proven itself to be a conflict that challenges not only the local and regional actors, but also the current analytical capacities and theoretical frameworks.

The previous sections dealt with the aspects of the ethnical violence occurring in this young state from two different perspectives, allowing us to continue further, based on their presented conclusions. In order to understand more of the contextual side of the events that take place in South Sudan, a discursive analysis is in order. This section will therefore occupy itself with the selected actors and their approach to the question of ethnical violence.

Specific aspects of the discourse that can be found with relation to the South Sudan and the ethnical violence will be covered, while a conclusion based on representative speech acts will be presented at the end of this section.

Method

The particularity of South Sudan in relation to discourse and its analysis poses complex methodological challenges that we attempted to accommodate. The case of South Sudan, when compared with our previous study of Syrian chemical weapons discourse, displays several crucial specifics that prevent us from crafting a similarly comprehensive discursive apparatus, as we did in the case of the last conflict report.

South Sudan simply has no discourse regarding ethnical violence. At least not in the way we understand overarching discourses, as presented in the previous issue - with active actors, discursive authorities, attempts on influencing the generally perceived *truth*, and so on. What South Sudan does offer with regard to the discourse, however, is an intricate matrix of actors, which create different layers of discourses, sometimes not even meeting each other in a direct confrontation. The content of these discourses, and how they interact - or rather, do not interact - with each other may prove to be pivotal for understanding what is happening in South Sudan. The problem for us as researchers arises mainly from the inconsistency of the properties of the speech acts, which disallow us from creating a balanced apparatus, which is a necessary prerequisite for an objectivising discursive analysis. To put forward a thorough analysis would in this case mean to venture in the analysis of media outlets, which we consistently reject to do, for the impartiality reasons.

Nine actors on various levels will be briefly introduced, however, not necessarily always with a complete guide regarding their representatives and preferred channels.

The timeframe is limited only by the inception of the independent South Sudan, but is also taking into account the major change the events in the year 2013 brought therefore we tried to focus on the period following December 2013, when possible.

In order to put forward a reasonably comprehensive guide regarding the issue, we have decided to introduce concrete instances of speech acts that can be deemed representative of certain degrees of discourse related to the civil war in South Sudan and the topic of ethnic based violence. Our findings have pointed out a structure of the discourse, which we will employ in the current method. The discourse regarding the ethnic violence in South Sudan can be separated into three distinct layers: the local level (tribes, fighters, inhabitants of the area), national level (leaders and political representatives), and international level (other countries, IGAD+, UNMISS). Each of these layers will be introduced and explained through the actors that take part in them, aiming to achieve a broad understanding of the issue.

The last, fourth level of discourse, is the encompassing narrative, which binds all of the above into one complex discourse. This level is always present, but never addressed, since the detachment of the analysis is made possible by presenting an apparatus. In this case, we do not offer an adequate apparatus, thus we effectively become an actor shaping the fourth level of discourse, with relation to the reader. This is an important methodological limitation, which changes the way this research can be used, and also how it should be approached.

The Nature of Discourse

This research effort brought us to the very limits of the discursive analysis itself, and therefore, we find it necessary to discuss its fundamentals briefly.

Discourse, and discursive analysis, is an institution which allows us to see past the socially constructed narratives, serving

specific actors and their specific needs, in order to understand what was meant to remain hidden. When employed by the actors themselves, it is a part of the Foucaultian *dispositif*,¹ which is inherently a power structure, benefiting those who are in control of the discourse. Being in charge of the discourse is an indication of an actual power, which is merely reflected in a discursive position. Actors understand this, and that is why they contest each other in a struggle to push their own narrative. This is what enables us to see their true motivations, provided the analysis is constructed correctly.

As long as there is a discourse with actors actively contesting each other in order to shape the *truth*, it is essentially a sign of a balance and general healthiness of the analysed structure. But when the actors either refuse to take part in the discourse, or even worse, are unable to be recognized as an actor shaping the discourse, it is a sign of a fundamental problem. A sign that brings out crucial questions when the actor proves itself to be a major one elsewhere, or even more so, a one in possession of a generally accepted discursive authority. What this means for the United Nations with regard to the ethnical violence in the South Sudanese Civil War will be discussed below.

Actors

Following is a list of selected actors that are playing an active role in the SSCW with regard to ethnical violence, whether military, politically, or both. Most of the actors, however, represent a real fighting force, which possess measures to actively shape

¹ See Michel Foucault's *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings* for further reference.

the reconciliatory processes, or to subvert them. Presented below is not in any manner a complete list of all of the sides to the internal conflict in South Sudan.

UNMISS

United Nations Mission in South Sudan is a successor mission to the United Nations Mission in Sudan, established in the wake of nation's independence. UNMISS and related UN agencies are filling the role of a complex actor, with significant discursive capacities, supported by sizable military, economic, and political resources.

IGAD+

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development is the leading regional forum, consisting of Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, and Uganda, with addition of so-called *Troika*: Norway, United Kingdom, United States, which are represented by the addition of the + sign. This format is a facilitator of the venue for dealing with the crisis on a regional level, inviting various actors from within the South Sudan to join the talks. However, IGAD+ does not break away from the diplomatic boundaries, and focuses primarily on the reconciliation of the high-level representation of SPLM and SPLM-IO, namely Kiir and Machar, and a political solution to the crisis.

SPLM/A

Also analogous to the Government of the Republic of South Sudan, Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army is the leading political force, currently in possession of the public offices and the office of President. Representing the population of Dinka ethnicity, it currently acts as the main political tool of Salva Kiir Myardit, the incumbent President of the country.

SPLM/A-IO

Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army in Opposition seeks to put itself in the position of the advocate of the forces against Salva Kiir, continually attempting to unite all the rebels under its banner. The ethnical affiliation of this group is predominantly Nuer, with leading personalities such as Riek Machar, or Simon Gatwath, being of the Nuer descent as well. Machar is also the main presidential challenger to Kiir, which is the reason for his prominent position in the movement, while also being the reason for the sharp mutual rivalry between the two.

National Salvation Front

Abbreviated as NAS, the force is led by Thomas Cirillo, former SPLA general. His faction is relatively independent and does not represent a specific ethnicity. Because of his previous position as a high-ranking military officer in the state army, he is also frequently present in the political dialogue on a national level.

SSDM/Cobra Faction

South Sudan Democratic Movement, also referred to as the Cobra Faction, represents the Murle people, with forces and supporters primarily located in the Pibor area in the east of the country. This is also where its leader, David Yau Yau, concentrates most of his political activity, being able to strike deals of political nature with the central government that enable power devolution in favour of the Pibor administrative unit.²

² Claudio Todisco, „*Real but Fragile: The Greater Pibor Administrative Area*,“ *HSBA Working Paper, Small Arms Survey, March, 2015.* <http://www.smallarmssurveysudan.org/fileadmin/docs/working-papers/HSBA-WP35-Greater-Pibor.pdf>

Nuer White Army

The white army, which is covered at a great length in the first part of this Conflict Report, belongs to the Nuer ethnicity, chiefly the Lou Nuer. Bordoang Leah may be suggested as a representative figure of the otherwise strictly horizontal and democratic structure, where no leader actually occupies a position comparable to those of Kiir or Machar.

Arrow Boys

Youth militia, with Alfred Futoyi at its helm, initially set up to protect the Azande community from the spreading violence. Even though it is now an actor in the scope of SSCW, currently declaring an allegiance to the SPLM/A-IO, its formation was caused by the threat in the form of Lord's Resistance Army, led by Joseph Kony - a result of a conflict spill-over from the neighbouring countries.

SSFDP/SSAF

South Sudan Federal Democratic Party/South Sudan Armed Forces is a group formed by ethnic Lotuko, led by Anthony Ongwaja. Group is siding with the democratic demands of SPLM/A-IO and alongside with many independent rebel organisations advocates for federalist solution to the issues of South Sudan.

Research

The only actor actively using its own channels and attempting to shape the discourse through a wide array of means is the UNMISS. On the other hand, even the Government of the Republic of South Sudan (GRSS) does not run a functional independent channel to assist in taking part in the discourse. Actors are generally quoted on an ad-hoc basis by several news outlets, most commonly the Sudan Tribune or

various radio stations, such as Radio Tamazuj or UNMISS backed Radio Miraya. Exact information regarding the primary sources are scarce - especially on the local level - however, one can at times find a sufficient number of distinct sources referring to the same event, in order to confirm the place, date, exact person, or the way the information was released, by cross-referencing them. In general, the actors are not taking part in the discourse in the way the actors analysed in the previous Conflict Report did - the existence of the discourse is moved away from the public domain and exists in other forms, such as oral, with actors not giving much attention to the general accessibility of their speech acts. The phenomenon of radio listening, discussed below, also plays a prominent role in the discourse shaping.

The events of December 2013 are narrated by both Salva Kiir and Riek Machar, with Kiir accusing his former partners of coup attempt,³ while Machar denying such claims and suggesting that the coup allegation fits into the power-consolidation strategy of Kiir.⁴ A senior opposition figure, Peter Adwok, describes the events as a mutiny within the Tiger Battalion of SPLA, which he believes sparked the following events in Juba.⁵ None of these deal with the question of ethnical violence itself, as if it was generally accepted way of conduct when the conflict escalates into an armed confrontation.

International Level

IGAD+ remains to be a respected actor, bringing together wide array of warring

³ Content available via [BBC](#).

⁴ Content available via [Daily Nation](#).

⁵ Content available via [SouthSudanNation](#).

parties, facilitating ceasefires and major agreements.⁶ Even though it lacks the enforcement capabilities, the deals agreed on the forum are subject to enforcement primarily by the parties to the agreements themselves, thus allowing the intergovernmental authority to act as an observer of the process, using its diplomatic capacity in case of breaches.

UNMISS, on the other hand, regularly proves to be an actor which is not being able to meet the demands put onto it by the international community, even though its vast discursive output may convince its audience of the opposite. The Terrain hotel incident from the summer of 2016, where: “Five women working with humanitarian organisations were [...] raped. John Gatluak⁷ was shot at 6.15pm,”⁸ proved to be an example of such conduct. UNMISS has provided no official release regarding the events of July 11, 2016 at the time, while it released three press releases regarding other unrelated Juba events (one of them delivered by the Secretary-General),⁹ nor has it done so after the BBC released the testimonies of the victims of the attack, on the August 22, 2016.¹⁰ The problem was dealt with later on, after considerable media coverage, by the parent UN bodies.¹¹ Inability to fulfil its peacekeeping mandate, citing the lack of resources, has been admitted by Toby Lanzer, at the time Deputy Special Representative in the UNMISS, in an

⁶ Documents available via [ReliefWeb](#), [UN Peacemaker](#), and [UNMISS](#).

⁷ A Nuer journalist.

⁸ A court testimony by the Terrain hotel manager Mike Woodward provided by [The Guardian](#).

⁹ Content available via UNMISS [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).

¹⁰ Video content available via [YouTube](#).

¹¹ Content available via [Reuters](#).

interview for BBC Newsnight.¹² UNMISS is proving to be an actor which is largely ignored by the other actors partaking in the general discourse, while UNMISS itself decides to partake in the general discourse in a very selective manner.

National Level

Two major actors on the state level constitute of Salva Kiir and Riek Machar, whose positions naturally demand some media traction. However, none of their affiliated factions possesses discursive capabilities comparable to those of UNMISS, which is surprising, to say the least. It must mean, that they are either not forced to adapt these means of communication, or they do not feel the need to do so. Considering the widespread ethnical violence, the fact that the major actors do not partake in the discourse outside of IGAD+ meetings and a small number of media statements, points out to the fact that the ethnical violence is not viewed as a major issue in their view, as long as it does not alienate them with actors they deem powerful in relationship to them.

Local Level

Since the abuses take place most commonly at the lowest level of administration, effectively meaning both victims and perpetrators not being able to employ vast discursive capacities, the discourse is restricted to oral distribution, rarely being captured and disseminated through other means (with Terrain hotel attack being a rare exception). One example of an unusual venture into the discursive arena by a local group comes from the Nuer White Army, which released a statement through the e-mail address nuerpower@hotmail.com,

¹² Video content available via [YouTube](#).

warning to “invade Murleland and wipe out the entire Murle tribe from the face of the earth as the only solution to guarantee long-term security of Nuer’s cattle,”¹³ - a statement importantly occurring before the 2013 incidents. This suggest that the ethnical violence is not a new tool in settling the disputes within the various groups of South Sudan, while it also questions whether the peace process focusing solely on the political reconciliation is the correct way to solve the issue of ethnical violence at all.

In order to successfully analyse the discourse in its entirety, a field research beyond the capacity of our institution is necessary. However, the nature of the discourse may prove sufficient enough for an understanding of the perceptions of the issue by the warring parties.

Radio Listening

Interesting discursive device in the setting of South Sudan comes in the form of radio. Radio listening is a simple way of gathering important information, with more than 40% of the population of South Sudan being listeners of the radio, while approximately 60% of these listen to the radio daily.¹⁴ UNMISS backed Radio Miraya is a good example of the way the radio works as a two-way discursive device in this environment: programme *Democracy in Action*, currently aired on Mondays, between 7pm and 8pm, invites various

representatives, while also encouraging listeners to join the debate, with number of callers easily reaching into the two digits. Moderator always asks about the name and whereabouts of the callers, effectively allowing for a balanced discursive exchange, since the identity of the guest is introduced at the beginning of the programme.¹⁵ The discrepancies in the understanding of the discourse between the local and the international actors are then made even more evident.

Conclusion

Our findings have in essence confirmed the findings put forward by the first section of this Conflict Report. The strange nature of the discourse indicates that there is a fundamental difference in the matrix of the society itself, which is the reason why the actors act the way they do, and the way the international community tries to go about the problem. The layered nature of the discourse, with actors not necessarily meeting in one arena when presenting their speech acts, suggests deeply rooted motivations for the behaviour of the actors on the lowest level. In order to aid in the process of reconciliation and mending of the torn country, one cannot take these lightly.

The inability of UNMISS to be recognized as a viable actor with regards to the discourse points out to a critical lack of actual power to enforce the norms, which can be seen on several occasions, and this claim is also supported by the reaction of a senior UNMISS official to the allegations of failure to protect the civilians by the peacekeeping mission. As one citizen of South Sudan remarked on the social media profile of

¹³ Content available via [CS Monitor](#).

¹⁴ Forcier Consulting, „*South Sudan National Audience Survey: A Nationally Representative Assessment on Radio Listening Habits with Key Findings in Five Booster Areas for Internews Stations*,“ Forcier Consulting, September, 2013. https://www.internews.org/sites/default/files/resources/InternewsSouthSudanAudienceSurvey_web_2013-10-31.pdf

¹⁵ Online streaming available via [UNMISS](#), [TuneIn](#), or [Live Online Radio](#).

UNMISS, in response to a condemnation of an attack on their peacekeeping force: “You are just always says condemn condemn make a decision not condemn.”¹⁶ This begs the question whether it would not be advisable to spend resources on treating causes of the conflict, including the mediation support, instead of focusing on the symptoms. This change in approach would possibly show that the inhabitants and representatives of South Sudanese fighting groups can deal with their problems in their own way, albeit with a degree of genuine mediatory guidance.

¹⁶ Content available via [Facebook](#).

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