



United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)

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MEDIA MONITORING REPORT

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Highlights

Captured twice and looted twice, a state capital in South Sudan fears third battle (The Telegraph)

South Sudan's civil war has lasted barely a fortnight, but the town of Bor on the White Nile has already changed hands twice and been looted twice.

With 15,000 people gathered for safety inside its United Nations camp, many fear this state capital could suffer a third round of fighting.

Bor fell to the rebels soon after Riek Machar, a former vice-president, began his uprising on Dec 15. The first capture of the town was accompanied by general looting, forcing thousands to flee.

Then government soldiers loyal to President Salva Kiir retook Bor on Christmas Eve, causing another round of plunder. Now, the market and the university have both been pillaged, along with compounds previously used by international aid agencies. Thousands of fugitives, mainly from Mr Machar's Nuer tribe, have gathered in the local UN camp, along with some 350 Eritreans.

These migrant workers have been singled out by both sides. "We Eritrean citizens have a problem: we have been targeted," said one man, who gave his name as David. "Our property is being taken. Our shops and everything have been looted."

The UN is providing water to the refugees, but many have not been given food – and whatever supplies they brought with them are running out.

For now, the town is under the control of government forces. Yet that provides little reassurance as most of the soldiers are from President Kiir's Dinka tribe – and they have been accused of revenge attacks against Nuer civilians.

The camp itself is protected by UN peacekeeping troops, but David said that not enough were available. "Until now, the camp has not been attacked. But the army here is very few – there are very few [UN] soldiers here," he added.

Sunday's developments suggested that Bor, the capital of Jonglei state, was at risk of changing hands for a third time. A Nuer militia known as the "White Army" was said to be massing near town, which had a pre-war population of about 25,000.

The government alleged that tens of thousands of militiamen were assembling. There was no independent confirmation of this – and later reports suggested that the armed men might have dispersed.

But the White Army – so named because its fighters paint themselves in white earth - has a notorious reputation. During South Sudan's independence war, the White Army carried out a massacre in Bor in 1991, killing at least 2,000 Dinkas.

Whether the White Army is linked to Mr Machar – supposing that it has been mobilised at all – is also uncertain. The UN Mission in South Sudan said only that it had been "tracking reports of the movement of armed youth for several days" and reconnaissance flights were taking place.

But people who have managed to flee Bor fear the consequences of any new assault.

Manfred Taege, a lecturer at the John Garang Memorial University who was evacuated from Bor on Christmas Eve, said the threat was very real. "From all that I know about the whole struggle in South Sudan, since the White Army was activated, Bor is really under threat," he said.

"If they are able to capture Bor, it will be a terrible situation. There are revenge actions against the Nuer going on in Bor. If the White Army comes, then the situation will turn and the revenge will be by the Nuer against the Dinka."

A cycle of tribal violence is exactly what South Sudan's Western and African allies want to avoid. They are pressing for an immediate ceasefire followed by peace talks between Mr Kiir and Mr Machar. So far, however, no firm agreements have been reached.

South Sudan Officials: White Army Youths Marching on Bor (VOA)

NAIROBI — South Sudan's military says thousands of armed youth loyal to ousted Vice President Riek Machar are marching toward the government-held town of Bor, as the international community presses for a cease-fire.

Military spokesman Philip Aguer told VOA Saturday the Machar-backed force - the so called "White Army" - plans to attack the central town, which was retaken by government forces this past week. The youth, like Machar, are ethnic Nuers while President Salva Kiir and his loyalists are ethnic Dinka.

Aguer said military forces in Bor can repel any attack. The tribal violence erupted earlier this month after the president accused Machar of attempting a coup.

The United Nations says the fighting has left more than 1,000 people dead and displaced thousands of others. Seeking an end to the nearly two-week crisis, a grouping of East Africa leaders announced Friday that South Sudan had agreed to a "cessation of hostilities" and the start of peace talks. The government also agreed to release eight of 11 political prisoners suspected of plotting the coup.

But Saturday, Machar ally Rebecca Nyandeng told VOA that Machar forces will not agree to cease-fire terms until the government releases all 11 prisoners.

For his part, Machar on Saturday stopped short of accepting the government offer. He told British radio the "mechanisms for monitoring" any agreement must first be established.

South Sudan army says Malakal under government control (Sudan Tribune)

The South Sudan army declared on Sunday that it was in full control of Malakal, the Upper Nile State capital after a fierce battle with rebels.

The announcement, which could not be independently verified, brings to an end a week-long fight over the town which was partially in control of rebels loyal to former vice president Riek Machar.

Colonel Phillip Aguer, spokesman of the South Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) said the army had liberated Malakal from "hooligans."

"The situation in Malakal has changed since Friday. You know there were attacks in the SPLA headquarters in Malakal, but it is controlled at the moment. The SPLA forces are pursuing them [rebels] outside the town," Aguer told *Sudan Tribune* on Sunday.

The SPLA spokesman said the security situation in Bor, the capital of Jonglei state was not "very bad" adding that government forces were fending off attacks from the rebels who lost control of the town last week.

The political crisis in South Sudan was triggered off two weeks ago when fighting broke out in the barracks among members of the presidential guard in Juba before spreading to residential areas and extending to Bor, the state capital of Jonglei.

Several members who are mainly from the Nuer ethnic group fled to two separate camps of the United Nations in Juba for fear of allegedly being attacked by the Dinka. Meanwhile in Bor, the commander of the SPLA's 8th division, Peter Gadet Yak and James Kong Chuol, commander of the 4th division in Unity state, switched allegiance to Riek Machar.

The now former SPLA commanders, like Machar, are from the Nuer tribe, the second largest in South Sudan after the Dinka.

Even though the government says Malakal is now under its control, the security situation appears fluid.

The whereabouts of the governor, Simon Kun Puoc, remains unknown while some of his cabinet ministers

have reportedly fled to a UN camp. Others have fled to their villages and other towns. This followed the defection of the 7th division commander of forces around Malakal.

Despite that, Aguer says the army is in control of Malakal and that the security situation in the country had improved.

"The general security situation in the country except few places where SPLA forces have been forced to defend and protect lives and properties of our civil population is normal. Juba as you all know now is under maximum security control", he said.

"Civilians have started to return in Bor. SPLA forces there are on high alert, given that we have received reports that Dr. Riek Machar has decided to mobilize the "white army" to launch an attack on Bor. But the situation there is quiet at the moment. It is under full control," added the army spokesperson.

South Sudan conflict: Fears for isolated children (BBC)

Thousands of children are likely to have been separated from their families as a result of the latest violence in South Sudan, an aid agency has warned.

Save the Children says many children are surviving on their own in very remote areas.

Some have witnessed their parents being killed and their homes looted or destroyed.

The fighting broke out two weeks ago in the capital Juba, and has spread to many parts of the country.

At least 1,000 people have died.

"Start Quote

In about three days alone we have registered 60 children in one site in Juba who have been separated from their families" - Helen Mould Save the Children

The positions of the warring factions in South Sudan seem to be hardening ahead of a regional deadline for talks to begin.

South Sudan only became independent from Sudan in 2011, after decades of conflict.

'Hiding in swamps'

More than 121,000 people fled their homes when fighting started, with the result that many families were split up, Save the Children said.

The charity said while many people had sought refuge in UN compounds or host communities in safer areas, others, including children, were hiding in swampy areas with no shelter where they would be forced to drink stagnant water.

"In about three days alone we have registered 60 children in one site in Juba who have been separated from their families because of the conflict," Save the Children's Helen Mould told the BBC's Newsday programme. "Until we get access to these areas where the fighting has been at its hardest, in Jonglei, in Upper Nile state... it's difficult to know what the exact circumstances are and it's difficult for us to respond," she said. What began as a power struggle between rebel leader Riek Machar and President Salva Kiir has taken on overtones of an ethnic conflict. The Dinka, to which Mr Kiir belongs, are pitted against the Nuer, from which Mr Machar hails.

The government has offered a ceasefire, but the army says its forces are still battling rebels over oilfields in the north.

'No prisoner releases'

East African mediators have given both sides until Tuesday to agree an end to hostilities.

But as the deadline looms, positions seem to be hardening, the BBC's James Copnall reports from Juba.

It had seemed as if the government was prepared to release several detained politicians - Mr Machar's main condition for beginning talks, he says.

However, senior government figures now say this will not happen, citing Mr Machar's refusal to accept the cessation of hostilities

Mr Machar says it is impossible to stop fighting before the talks, as verification mechanisms would need to be agreed on first.

Meanwhile, there are conflicting reports about a march by youths loyal to Mr Machar on the strategic town of Bor.

Claims that most of the fighters had gone home were later denied, and some of the youths are said to have clashed with government forces.

Mr Machar was vice-president until Mr Kiir sacked him in July.

Earlier this month fighting broke out between rival army factions after Mr Kiir accused Mr Machar of trying to unseat him in a coup.

For American missionaries in South Sudan, it was a Christmas unlike any other (Washington Post)

By Sudarsan Raghavan, MALAKAL, South Sudan — It was Christmas morning, and the eight Americans and 10 South Sudanese orphans lay huddled under their beds, shivering with fear. Outside, rival soldiers were trying to kill one another. Heavy gunfire exploded in waves, rattling the windows.

Trapped for hours, the group prayed silently for survival. “We were trying to keep the kids quiet,” Bradley Campbell, a missionary from Omaha, said as he recalled their ordeal Sunday, seated inside a U.N. peacekeeping base not far from their home. “We didn’t want anyone to find us.”

Along with thousands of South Sudanese, Campbell and his group are among scores of Americans who have found themselves in peril in the world’s newest nation as violent clashes rage between rival factions of the army.

The U.S. government has evacuated more than 400 U.S. officials and private citizens since fighting broke out two weeks ago, a State Department official said. But Campbell and his family and friends, along with the orphans they are caring for, remain in Malakal, inside the base where they found refuge on Christmas night.

There was no U.S. evacuation flight Sunday, even though the United Nations considered the situation calm enough to send several planes into Malakal carrying peacekeeping personnel and supplies.

“We are looking to do anything we can to get people out of Malakal in a way that’s safe and secure,” the State Department official said. “Our priority is always American citizens.”

American officials have refused to say how many more U.S. citizens in South Sudan are awaiting evacuation. At the base in Malakal, U.N. officials said those waiting for a U.S. flight number about 60, including the Campbells’ group as well as other Americans, Canadians, Australians and New Zealanders. Campbell, 44, is a former visual artist whose submission was among seven finalists for the World Trade Center memorial to honor those killed on Sept. 11, 2001; the competition attracted more than 5,000 entries from 63 nations.

In 2005, he gave up his career in New York to become a pastor and eventually traveled to work in sub-Saharan Africa. He and his wife, Kim, along with some of their five children, arrived in South Sudan in March 2012 to work with refugee children for Keeping Hope Alive, a Christian ministry based in Charlotte. In a country that is predominantly Christian, the Campbells started taking care of orphans who had lost parents to conflict or illness, a group that has grown to 10 children, ages 6 through 17.

The violence was triggered by fighting Dec. 15 between soldiers loyal to President Salva Kiir and those aligned with his deputy, Riek Machar. The next day, Kiir accused Machar of plotting a coup, sparking bloodshed that quickly spread to five of South Sudan’s 10 states, killing hundreds and forcing tens of thousands to flee to U.N. bases in several towns.

Inside their house, Bradley Campbell’s two stepdaughters, Cassidy and Katie Talbott, worried. Mattresses had been placed against the bedroom door, their suitcases on top of their beds. Both knew about South Sudan’s history of civil conflict and ethnic and tribal clashes, and they had heard stories about the soldiers’ brutality.

“The house would shake, and when the bullets came through the windows, you are trying to mentally prepare yourself,” said Katie Talbott, 23. “What if the soldiers come inside? What are they going to do? We’ve heard stories about them doing horrible things to people.”

After the gunfire began to wind down in the late afternoon, the group grabbed some clothes and snacks and made their way toward the U.N. base. Eventually they arrived at a back gate where thousands of South Sudanese were trying to enter. When U.N. workers advised the Americans to use another entrance, many of the South Sudanese followed.

"A man tried to hand me his child," Katie Talbott recalled. "He said, 'Please take my baby with you; please take her to safety.' "

Eventually the South Sudanese were allowed to enter.

Inside the base, conditions were dire. Campbell recalled that his group's only food was packets of nuts and dried fruit brought from their house. Water, too, was scarce, and they depended on the kindness of U.N. workers and others. For the past five nights, Campbell and his group have slept together on a floor with other displaced people — 24 in a single room. On Sunday, Campbell held a church service inside the camp. Many of the South Sudanese from their community in Malakal are missing, he said.

"We don't know where our neighbors are," said Kim Campbell, 54. "It's definitely the most intense thing I have ever been through." As they wait to be evacuated, another huge concern occupies their minds. Will the U.S. government also fly out the orphans? The children are not American citizens. The Campbells say they have applied with local child welfare authorities to become their legal guardians, and they worry about what will happen if the children remain in South Sudan.

All but one of the orphans is ethnic Nuer, Kim Campbell said, and some of the fighting has unfolded along tribal lines, pitting ethnic Dinka, the group to which the president belongs, against Nuer, the vice president's group. "There is no Plan B for them," she said. "Because they are Nuer, there could be a death sentence on them." Bradley and Kim Campbell said they will not leave Malakal without the orphans, but they want to get their daughters out regardless.

Their daughters have a different idea.

"We want to get out. But I am not going to leave unless the kids are going to come," Katie said as Cassidy, 16, nodded in agreement. "I am not going to leave my parents here, either, knowing what they are going through and what it is like here. I can't consciously be sitting back in America without them."

UN warns of danger as Bor attack looms (Sudan Tribune)

The United Nations mission in South Sudan on Sunday expressed concerns over reports that armed youth were advancing towards Bor, the Jonglei state capital allegedly in preparation for possible attacks.

"These youths have been reportedly moving across the state for some time now, with a possible intention of attacking other communities," Hilde Johnson, the head of the UN mission said in a statement extended to *Sudan Tribune*. The world body, she disclosed, had been tracking reports on the movements of these armed groups, but said their size and location could not be independently confirmed.

"The Mission has started conducting an aerial reconnaissance flight over Jonglei today to get a clearer idea of the numbers of armed youths and the direction in which they are headed", Johnson noted.

She, however, said the involvement of the armed youths in the ongoing violence would not only worsen the already volatile and unpredictable security situation, but further put civilian lives at risk.

"South Sudan does not need another escalation of the crisis involving armed youth, pitching communities against communities. This can end in a vicious cycle of violence," she emphasised.

ATTACK LOOMS

The South Sudanese army (SPLA) spokesperson, Philip Aguer, said Saturday that rebel forces loyal to former vice-president Riek Machar are planning an attack on Bor.

"We have information that forces loyal to Riek Machar are believed to be preparing a fresh offensive on Bor. We don't know the number, but it is estimated 25,000 youths from the Lou Nuer [tribe] have been mobilised to participate in the attack", Aguer said.

Mutineers from the army took control of Bor a few days after conflict broke out between members of the presidential guard on 15 December in the capital, Juba, with the army later retaking control of Bor on 24 December.

A spokesperson for the dissident forces on Saturday said their troops briefly withdrew from Bor town for "tactical" reasons, admitting that government forces were in control.

"It is only [a matter] time for our forces to reclaim the town to prevent targeted lynching of individuals on suspensions of their loyalties", partly reads a statement the dissident group extended to Sudan Tribune. The UN says that 120,000 people have been displaced and over 1,000 people killed since the fighting spread from Juba to Jonglei, as well as into the country's oil-producing states of Unity and Upper Nile.

CALLS FOR DIALOGUE

Johnson said she was in contact with a number of political and community leaders to ensure the armed youth are convinced to immediately halt their advance.

"To avoid further bloodshed, these youths should return to their towns, villages and cattle camps to avert a further escalation of the crisis in South Sudan", she stressed.

"UNMISS reiterates its call for dialogue between representatives of the government and former Vice President Machar to achieve a peaceful resolution to the current crisis," added the head of the UN mission in the country.

25,000-Strong 'White Army' Disbands, Returns Home after Leaders Intervene (Sudan Vision)

South Sudan's minister of information says that most of the 25,000-strong militia that had been marching toward a potentially vicious military confrontation has disbanded and returned home.

Michael Makuei Lueth told The Associated Press Sunday that Nuer community leaders in Jonglei state persuaded the "White Army" fighters to go home.

Lueth said only a "very few" refused to disband. He said an exact number was not known.

South Sudan has had two weeks of violence. The government accuses former Vice-President Riek Machar, an ethnic Nuer, of a coup attempt against President Salva Kiir, a Dinka.

Lueth on Saturday told a news conference that more than 25,000 Lou Nuer youth were marching toward Bor.

The United Nations Sunday said it was "extremely concerned" and urged the fighters to return home.

In South Sudan Camp, Lives Compressed (The New York Times)

South Sudan — As an artist in Brooklyn working on a design for the World Trade Center memorial, Bradley Campbell chose water as a central element because it symbolized life, rejuvenation and rebirth. A decade later and half a world away, the water that aid workers provided to Mr. Campbell, now a pastor, to his family and to the 10 orphans under their care was the difference between life and death.

As many as 22,000 people from around the world — from France and New Zealand, Ethiopia and South Africa — have found themselves at a camp set up inside a United Nations peacekeeping base just outside the northern city of Malakal. They are bound together by hunger and thirst, fear of the soldiers and rebels fighting outside, and a desire to go somewhere safe.

"We need the humanitarians to take us somewhere to save our lives," said Hoth Gatkuoth, 27, who had taken shelter in a broken-down white sport utility vehicle before moving into the camp. He said that people had begun to quarrel and that he feared it would get worse if conditions did not improve. "After two days, the people will fight inside the camp," he said.

South Sudan was plunged into violence two weeks ago when a political struggle in the capital turned into a bloody ethnic conflict, with more than a thousand deaths reported nationwide. After days of pitched fighting last week, with stray bullets wounding even those inside the United Nations compound, government forces retook Malakal. But former Vice President Riek Machar is still refusing to sit down for peace talks with President Salva Kiir, who has accused Mr. Machar of attempting a coup.

Others at the camp on Sunday were sitting inside sweltering metal shipping containers that at least provided some protection from the harsh midday sun. "The soldiers took all our money," said Sami Tsegay, 20, from Eritrea. "We have nothing to drink, nothing to eat, nowhere to go to the toilet."

The stench of human waste baking in the sun was overwhelming, and humanitarian workers were preoccupied by the possibility of an outbreak of a communicable disease like cholera. And as if that were not enough, the displaced residents of Malakal said, there were also snakes to worry about. In the strategic city of Bor, 230 miles south of Malakal, there were fears of renewed fighting after a column of young men was seen approaching. Joseph Contreras, a spokesman for the United Nations mission in South Sudan, said a reconnaissance flight had spotted the armed youth on the road to Bor. Mr. Contreras called their presence “a voluntary and unpredictable ingredient in the present security situation,” one that placed “unarmed civilians at even greater risk.”

The continuing threats left Mr. Campbell, 44, and his wife, Kim, with a difficult decision. As American citizens, they and their two daughters had the option of taking an evacuation flight rumored to be coming later in the day, but they did not know if the orphans, ages 6 to 17, could come with them. Ms. Campbell, 54, said that if they could not bring the children, they would stay. “When you hear about it, read about it, it’s always someone else, somewhere else,” she said. “These are real lives and real people.” They were doing better than most at the makeshift camp, but that still meant sleeping in a recreation room with 24 people, the smallest of the children bedding down on the pool table. For food, which was so scarce that even United Nations workers were running out, they rationed the cashews, dried apples and beef jerky they had brought with them from the orphanage in Malakal. It was a far cry from Mr. Campbell’s days as a visual artist living in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. A decade ago he was enjoying success after “Lower Waters,” the memorial design proposal by Mr. Campbell and his partner, Matthias Neumann, was among the eight finalists in the World Trade Center competition, which had attracted entries from around the world.

But he gave up art and found his calling as a pastor. His mission, working with orphans in South Sudan, was a difficult job even under normal circumstances. During last week’s fighting, a bullet pierced the window of the family’s bedroom; another severed a branch from the lemon tree in their yard. They hid under beds with their daughters and the orphans. “This is the first time I’m going to preach in a T-shirt going on seven days without a shower,” Mr. Campbell said as he prepared for a Sunday church service at an outdoor bar and cafe, known as the Hard Rock Cafe Malakal, where United Nations personnel used to sip beer. The Campbells kept their spirits up by praying and focusing on the welfare of the children, who they said had been through enough in their short lives. One of them, Ngurri Akim, 17, had lost an arm in an electrocution accident when he was living on the streets.

South Sudan forces battle ‘White Army’ militia (The Washington Post)

JUBA, South Sudan — South Sudan’s army clashed Sunday with ethnic Nuer fighters, and government officials accused rebels of mobilizing the force despite the government’s offer of a truce to end the conflict. Information Minister Michael Makuei said the Nuer militia had dwindled in numbers — from an estimated 25,000 — after Nuer politicians and tribal elders persuaded it to abandon its march on Bor, the provincial capital of Jonglei state. “About 5,000 refused to abandon the march, and they have proceeded with their advance on Bor. They then dislodged [government troops] from Mathiang, about 18 miles from Bor,” Makuei said by phone from South Sudan’s capital, Juba, 120 miles south of Bor. Government troops retook Bor from rebel forces Tuesday after several days of heavy fighting. Witnesses spoke of panicked civilians fleeing the city to escape another round of bloodletting. Nuer fighters — called the “White Army” because they dust their bodies with ash to ward off insect bites — have threatened the central government in the recent past. Former vice president Riek Machar, whom President Salva Kiir has accused of a coup attempt, is an ethnic Nuer. Bor was the scene of a massacre of ethnic Dinka in 1991 by Nuer fighters loyal to Machar.

The United Nations said the involvement of the Nuer fighters brings another volatile ingredient to the situation.

"South Sudan does not need another escalation of the crisis involving armed youth, pitching communities against communities. This can end in a vicious cycle of violence," Hilde Johnson, special representative of the U.N. secretary general, said in a statement.

South Sudan Information Minister Says Oil Producing Areas Fully Secured (Malaysian News Agency)

KHARTOUM, Dec 30 (BERNAMA-NNN-SUNA) -- The Minister of Information of South Sudan, Michael Makoy, has affirmed that the situation in oil producing areas in the country's Upper Nile State is "fully secured". In a telephone interview with the Sudan news Agency (SUNA) over the weekend, he stated that the incidents which happened at Malakal town were far away from the oil producing areas, while indicating that oil in Jonglei State was not yet exploited. He said the situation in the South Sudan capital, Juba, is stable and calm and the people are going about their work as usual. The foreign diplomatic missions were still maintaining their embassies in Juba, apart from a few diplomats who were evacuated.

Makoy said Juba had agreed on the cessation of hostilities in the first stage of the mediation sponsored by the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the eight-nation Horn of Africa bloc, for ending the fighting. The fighting started between government forces and supporters of Riek Machar, the sacked former vice-president, on Dec 15, based on the responsibility of the government to protect lives of citizens. On the social and economic impact of the fighting, the minister referred to a move of displacement of citizens at the disputed areas as a result of rumours circulated by some people who are intent on anarchy and instability in South Sudan.

Juba Criticizes International Community Double Standard Positions (Sudan Vision)

Khartoum - South Sudan government lambasted US and European calls for release of detainees arrested on charges of involvement in the last coup attempt, dubbing their positions as double standard. South Sudan Minister of Information and Broadcasting wondered if these countries would have tolerated the occurrence of such attempt to abort democracy at home, or whether President Obama would have been content with a military coup against his administration.

The South Sudan official said by putting as a condition for talks release of Pagan Amum and other detainees, Machar has proven complicity in the attempted coup, while he used to deny that. "Detainees would not be released unless they stand trial," he said, but returned to add that President Salva Kiir has the right to pardon them if he so wished.

The Minister said the international community call for their release was meaningless since detainees were attempting to topple the democratic system which the west alleges its advocacy. If that call for release of detainees was accepted, this would give the green light for any group to take up arms and overthrow the legitimate power in any state, he argued.

The Minister denied that the major cause for these developments was tribal affiliations, saying the sixteen detainees belonged to various South Sudan regions; the majority of them were ethnic Dinkas, while four only belonged to the Nuer tribe. He disclosed that Garang's widow was still advisor to the president who ordered not to hold her to account in commemoration of her husband who was considered the state symbol, and that her request to leave for Nairobi for medical check-up was approved.

S. Sudanese media finding it difficult to report fairly on crisis: activist (Sudan Tribune)

A civil society activist has complained that South Sudan's media is finding it difficult to report in a balanced and accurate manner on the ongoing political crisis in the country.

Speaking in an interview with *Sudan Tribune* on Sunday, an executive member of a civil society coalition who did not want to be named for safety reasons said the media is not adequately reporting alternative views that diverge from the government position.

“The government says it was an aborted coup and should be reported as such. Of course there are people with different opinions about what happened but they don’t say it in the media,” said the source.

Following the outbreak of fighting between rival factions with the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) two weeks ago, president Salva Kiir accused his former deputy Riek Machar of plotting a coup to topple his government. Machar denies the accusations.

The civil society source said the South Sudanese media is afraid of contradicting the government position. “Media personnel are also cautious and afraid to talk about issues that would anger the government and bring them into the loggerhead [with government] again”.

Even before the current political crisis in the country broke out, South Sudan journalists were already having an acrimonious relationship with the government following their rejection of a directive by the information and broadcasting minister, Michael Makuei Lueth, to register with the government.

But in response to criticism of the un-conducive environment in the country for independent journalism, Interior minister Aleu Ayeny Aleu said South Sudan is a “democratic country” with freedom of the media and expression.

“We are a democratic country. Everyone is entitled to their opinion provided what they say does not incite violence, hatred and all those bad things which discourage love and unity of our people,” Aleu said on Sunday.

“So why does anyone feel threatened? If you have not said anything dangerous to the state, against law and people of this country, why should they fear to talk if they know about what happened,” wondered the Interior Minister.

But an independent journalist who also did not want to be identified for fear of reprisal said it has been difficult reaching and getting to people with different opinions from those of government.

“The focus now is how to resolve this crisis. Politicians are avoiding narratives of what happened. They are saying let’s not scratch the wounds. So media is focusing on what is being said by the politicians. But of course there are people with different opinions,” the journalists said.

REGIONAL

Suspicion threatens IGAD’s role in South Sudan conflict (*Sudan Tribune*)

As the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) member countries try to end nearly three weeks of conflict in South Sudan, some of its leaders have been accused of actions likely to further escalate the situation. The regional body, on Friday, held special discussions in the Kenyan capital, Nairobi and resolved that both parties in the conflict immediately cease ongoing hostilities and embrace dialogue. Sources privy to the close-door talks, also hinted on the possibility of a power-sharing deal between government and the opposition, as regional leaders seek to restore peace and stability in the new nation.

MIXED REACTIONS

IGAD involvement, some activists and politician say, will not quickly bring to an end South Sudan’s current conflict, citing they called “double standards” from its leaders like Uganda’s Yoweri Museveni.

“[Museveni treats the leaders of IGAD like his children. They did not question what he meant by ‘his country’s efforts in securing critical infrastructure and installations in the Republic of South Sudan’,” said Peter Adwok Nyaba in rebuttal of IGAD’s resolutions.

Nyaba, a former minister for higher education, was among the 11 senior South Sudanese politicians detained in connection with the alleged coup attempt in the country, but released on Friday.

He further alleged that Uganda has nearly 3,000 troops and some war planes currently involved in South Sudan conflict, a claim Uganda army officials have repeatedly denied.

“It was about time the civil society started to make noise although this will not stop the conflict as long as it is viewed in terms of Dinka-Nuer dichotomy,” said the ex-minister.

The IGAD leaders, he added, failed to secure release of the detained SPLM politicians, yet forging way for dialogue.

But, in an interview with *Sudan Tribune* last week, Paddy Ankunda, the spokesperson of the Ugandan army (UPDF) said their forces were only in South Sudan to rescue Ugandans trapped in the violence.

More than 1,000 people are feared dead and tens of thousands left homeless after violence, which initially started in the capital, Juba, spontaneously spread to three of the country’s 10 states.

South Sudan leader, Salva Kiir blames his former vice-president for the violence, while the latter downplayed it as a ploy by government to crack down on opposition in the ruling party (SPLM).

A South Sudanese civil society entity said IGAD and peace advocated across the globe should first push for immediate agreement on ceasefire and pursue the conflicting parties to have a political dialogue without any delay before political

“opportunists” utilise the current situation for their own interests.

“Citizens of South Sudan want nothing apart from ceasefire and political dialogue so as to end the violent conflict that is claiming lives of South Sudanese innocent citizens”, Community Empowerment for Progress Organisation (CEPO) said in a statement.

Scores of world leaders have, meanwhile, welcomed the IGAD-initiated talks, seen as key in resolving the current political deadlock in the country. ([Read More](#))

UN back regional move to end conflict in S Sudan (Standard Digital)

A regional push to have the warring factions in South Sudan cut a deal to end the conflict has received the backing of United Nations Secretary- General Ban Ki Moon.

The UN boost came just two days before the expiry of the December 31 deadline for face-to-face talks between President Salva Kiir and opposition leader Riek Machar. The ultimatum for the talks was issued at a meeting of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development in Nairobi. Through his spokesperson, the UN boss said he was happy that the deal brokered on Friday was going to open doors for “a ceasefire, the release of the detainees and building toward a process of peaceful dialogue”. It was also accompanied with a warning to the people of South Sudan that those killing and persecuting people will be punished. “The United Nations stands with the people of South Sudan and will continue to do everything within its means to protect civilians at risk and provide necessary humanitarian assistance. All violence, attacks and human rights abuses must end immediately. The Secretary General reminds those responsible that they will be held accountable,” read the brief. Supply aid UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs is set to begin flights to supply aid to the thousands trapped in the conflict that has so far claimed 1,000 lives, displaced 122,000 people, 63,000 of the displaced in UN missions. “Starting December 30, UNHAS will offer humanitarian flights between Juba-Nairobi,” UN OCHA South Sudan office tweeted. Yesterday, there were reports that a band of South Sudanese youth -loyal to rebel leader Riek Machar - marching on the strategic town of Bor. The BBC, quoting South Sudan government sources, reported the movement of the youth. “Government troops are currently in control of Bor, the capital of Jonglei State they had taken from the rebels. The government has offered to cease hostilities, but an army spokesman told the BBC that its forces were still battling over oilfields in the north,” the BBC reported.

Armed with machetes and sticks, the “wildcard” group does not have military training, a UN spokesman told the BBC. The UN is organising surveillance flights to ascertain the group’s size, added the spokesman, Joe Contreras.

Ethnic militia South Sudan accused rebels on Sunday of mobilising a feared ethnic militia for new attacks despite a government offer of a truce to end two weeks of conflict in the young state, global news agency, Reuters reported. A 25,000-strong force of the “White Army” - made up largely of ethnic Nuer youths who dust their bodies with ash - was marching on the town of Bor, recaptured by loyalist forces last Tuesday, an

army spokesman told Reuters. The White Army are recognised by the ash, prepared from burnt cow dung, with which they cover themselves to ward off insects. They are armed with machetes and sticks as well as guns. "We are prepared to engage them," Sudan People's Liberation Army spokesman Philip Aguer said by phone from South Sudan's capital, Juba, 190 km (120 miles) south of Bor by road. Defense Minister Kuol Manyang Juuk told Reuters politicians in Juba were speaking to the White Army members to tell them that this is not an ethnic-based conflict and to convince them to abandon their march on Bor. Toby Lanzer, UN assistant secretary-general, in Juba as deputy special representative and development & humanitarian coordinator wrote yesterday on Twitter that over 22,000 civilians had sought shelter at the UN Mission for South Sudan base in Malakal. In the UNMISS base in Melut, Lanzer said there were 700 people who had turned up. ([Read More](#))

INTERNATIONAL

William Hague urges South Sudan rivals to halt violence (BBC)

The UK foreign secretary has spoken to the leaders of both sides in the conflict in South Sudan and urged them to commit to an immediate ceasefire.

William Hague urged South Sudanese President Salva Kiir and rebel leader Riek Machar to halt the violence that has killed at least 1,000 people.

There could be no "military solution to this conflict," Mr Hague said.

His intervention is part of a wider international effort to foster a negotiated end to the fighting.

"A worsening conflict that causes South Sudan to slip back would be a tragedy" - William Hague Foreign Secretary, As well as the 1,000 people killed, more than 121,600 people are believed to have fled their homes in the country in recent weeks. Tens of thousands of civilians have sought refuge in UN camps. Mr Hague said a ceasefire was vital "to prevent the deaths of more innocent civilians" and to enable international humanitarian aid to reach people "in desperate need".

He urged Mr Kiir and Mr Machar to "enter into negotiations immediately and without preconditions" and offered UK diplomatic support to any talks.

'Coups plot'

The instability in the country, which gained independence in 2011, began in July when Mr Kiir sacked Mr Machar as his deputy.

In December, rival armed factions turned on each other and Mr Kiir accused Mr Machar of trying to unseat him in a coup. What began as a power struggle between the two men has taken on overtones of a tribal conflict. The Dinka, to which Mr Kiir belongs, are pitted against the Nuer, from which Mr Machar hails.

Last week US Secretary of State John Kerry urged both sides to enter into mediation. East African leaders on Friday agreed to attempt to bring Mr Kiir and Mr Machar to the negotiating table by 31 December.

The government has offered a ceasefire, but Mr Machar says any ceasefire has to be credible, properly monitored and preceded by the release of 11 detainees accused of being co-conspirators in the coup plan.

The army says its forces are still battling over oilfields in the north.

Mr Hague attended South Sudan's independence celebrations in 2011, after it ended decades of civil war by breaking away from its northern neighbour Sudan.

There, he said: "I... witnessed the hope and optimism felt by its people after years of conflict and sacrifice. Their safety and their future must be put first. "A worsening conflict that causes South Sudan to slip back would be a tragedy."

Canada suspends diplomatic operations in South Sudan (Toronto Sun)

OTTAWA -- Canada's diplomatic operations in South Sudan have been temporarily suspended and Canadians are urged to leave as tensions and violence in the world's newest country continue to escalate.

Fighting broke out Dec. 15 when President Salva Kiir accused former vice-president Riek Machar of attempting to overthrow him in a coup. Machar has denied the accusations and claims Kiir wants to quash all political opponents.

After the leaders of neighbouring Kenya and Ethiopia travelled to Juba to assist in brokering a political solution, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) released a statement Friday saying Kiir had agreed "in principle" to a ceasefire. Machar did not immediately react.

"[IGAD] welcomes the commitment by the government of the Republic of South Sudan to an immediate cessation of hostilities and calls upon Dr. Riek Machar and other parties to make similar commitments."

Kenya's President Kenyatta Uhuru said in a statement: "Let it be known that we in IGAD will not accept the unconstitutional overthrow of a duly and democratically elected government in South Sudan."

"Violence has never provided optimum solutions," he said.

Fighting escalated shortly after Dec. 15 as tensions metastasized along ethnic lines, with the majority Dinka community fighting against the smaller Nuer group. Kiir is a Dinka and Machar is a Nuer.

The United Nations has promised more peacekeepers and soldiers as the number of displaced civilians reaches more than 120,000, with many seeking refuge in UN camps around the country, according to media reports.

The foreign affairs department made the decision to temporarily relocate Canada's South Sudan head office to the Canadian High Commission in Nairobi, Kenya. "Due to operational challenges, including the unpredictable security environment in Juba, Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada (DFATD) has authorized the temporary suspension of operations at our office in Juba," Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Lynne Yelich said in a statement Friday.

Canadian officials are working to locate nationals across South Sudan, and the foreign affairs department has urged Canadians to leave via commercial flights while they are still available.

DFATD warned that many airlines were reducing services to South Sudan and said more than 50 Canadians have already left the country on commercial flights, while another 76 Canadians had been transported from South Sudan on allied military and chartered flights to nearby safe locations.

"If you choose to remain in the country despite this advisory, restrict your movements, ensure that your travel documents are up to date and keep abreast of the latest developments," the department said in a statement. Violent clashes have disrupted oil production, which accounts for roughly 98% of the South Sudan government's revenues.

Media reports out of South Sudan have described mass graves, massacres, widespread rapes and growing concern about civil war.

South Sudan gained independence two years ago and has been plagued with tensions since. Poverty is widespread, and though the country has oil reserves, the natural resource lies under land that is bitterly fought over between it and its northern neighbour, Sudan.

South Sudan Does Not Need Escalation of Crisis, UN Says As Armed Youths March On Bor (UN News)

The United Nations peacekeeping mission in South Sudan today voiced concern about reports of large numbers of armed youths moving towards the Jonglei state capital of Bor and called on all those with influence to convince them to immediately halt their advance and avoid a further escalation of the current crisis.

The mission (UNMISS) said in a news release that the youths have been reportedly moving across the state for some time, with a possible intention of attacking communities. It is conducting aerial reconnaissance over Jonglei to get a clearer idea of the numbers of armed youths and the direction in which they are headed.

South Sudan, which gained its independence after seceding from Sudan two years ago, has been embroiled in conflict that has increasingly been marked by reports of ethnically targeted violence. More than a thousand people have died and at least 122,000 displaced since the fighting began two weeks ago, with some 63,000 having taken refuge in UN bases in the country.

Conflict erupted after President Salva Kiir's Government said soldiers loyal to former deputy president Riek Machar, dismissed in July, launched an attempted coup. Mr. Kiir belongs to the Dinka ethnic group and Mr. Machar to the Lou Nuer. The youths marching on Bor are loyal to Mr. Machar, according to media reports. The involvement of these armed youths in the ongoing violence would add a "volatile and unpredictable ingredient" into the precarious security situation currently prevailing in the country, and place the lives of unarmed civilians at even greater risk, the Mission warned.

"South Sudan does not need another escalation of the crisis involving armed youth, pitching communities against communities. This can end in a vicious cycle of violence," said the Secretary-General's Special Representative and head of UNMISS, Hilde F. Johnson.

The envoy has been in contact with a number of political and community leaders, calling for their engagement.

"UNMISS calls on all parties who can exercise influence over the armed youths to convince them to immediately halt their advance," the Mission stated. "To avoid further bloodshed, these youths should return to their towns, villages and cattle camps to avert a further escalation of the crisis in South Sudan." UNMISS reiterated its call for dialogue between representatives of the Government and Mr. Machar to achieve a peaceful resolution to the current crisis.

Hague: No military solution to South Sudan conflict (ITV News)

Foreign Secretary William Hague said he spoke to South Sudan's President Salva Kiir and his former vice-president Dr Riek Machar urging them to commit to a ceasefire and a negotiated settlement. In a statement, the Foreign Secretary called:

"I have spoken today to President Salva Kiir and Dr Riek Machar to urge them both to commit to an immediate ceasefire. This is vital to prevent the deaths of more innocent civilians and to enable international humanitarian aid to reach people in desperate need.

"There can be no military solution to this conflict. I confirmed the UK's full support for the negotiations proposed by African leaders, and I encouraged President Kiir and Dr Machar to enter into negotiations immediately and without preconditions.

"The UK stands ready to provide diplomatic support to those talks.

"I attended the independence celebrations of South Sudan in Juba in 2011 and witnessed the hope and optimism felt by its people after years of conflict and sacrifice. Their safety and their future must be put first.

A worsening conflict that causes South Sudan to slip back would be a tragedy."

Diaspora community urges better protection for Bor displaced in Lakes state (Sudan Tribune)

Bor youth leaders in the diaspora community have appealed for better protection for thousands of displaced people in Lakes state's Awerial county, who recently fled violence in the Jonglei state capital. In a letter send to Lakes state's military caretaker governor, Maj. Gen. Matur Chut Dhuol, the diaspora community in Alberta, Canada expressed gratitude for the collective support provided by the Lakes state government and authorities in Awerial to assist displaced Bor communities.

However, Michael Reech Madit Reech, chairperson of the Bor county community in Alberta, also expressed regret over reports of a number of violent incidents targeting vulnerable displaced people, including robbery, threats and even murder.

"In light of such instances, we are not only expressing our gratitude to the majority of people of Lakes state, we are also pleading for humanity, protection and support of our people in your communities", the letter dated 28 December said.

"We have heard of stories of great hospitality afforded by the people of Lakes state to the displaced. We therefore acknowledge with appreciation this spirit and humanity demonstrated by your people through welcoming and sharing of resources with fellow citizens from across the river", it adds.

Thousands of people were displaced by fighting in Bor after dissident troops split from the South Sudanese army (SPLA) and overran the town.

Diaspora members have also called on authorities to facilitate the provision of necessary humanitarian support to members of the Bor community, including basic needs such as food, shelter, water and medical supplies.

“Through this letter, we are appealing to the government and people of the Lakes state to protect and facilitate necessary support as much as possible for people of Bor and other counties displaced to your communities”, Reech said in the letter, a copy of which was obtained by *Sudan Tribune*.

Aid agencies estimate that 40,000 have taken shelter in Lakes state after crossing the Nile from Bor to Awerial county’s Guol-yar.

Phillip Kot Job, a South Sudan Relief Rehabilitation Commission (SSRRC) official in the state, described the humanitarian situation as critical.

He said large numbers of displaced people, many of them women and children, were sleeping under trees and drinking contaminated water direct from the river.

A dispute within South Sudan’s presidential guards in the capital, Juba, on 15 December has sparked an outbreak of violence across South Sudan, with president Salva Kiir accusing former vice-president Riek Machar of masterminding a coup attempt to overthrow his government.

Defected army general Peter Gadet launched a rebellion against pro-government forces in Bor last week, with the SPLA regaining control of the town on 24 December.

The army said this week it has received information that forces loyal to Machar are preparing a fresh offensive on Bor.

OPINION/EDITORIAL/ANALYSIS

OPINION South Sudan crisis: A lesson for rabid secessionists (Daily Independent, Nigeria)

Raheem Oluwafunminiye - The month of July, 2011 marked a turning point in the history of South Sudan. Not only did it eventually come out of over two and half decades of a bloody civil war in Sudan after intense struggle with its northern neighbour, but also succeeded in becoming the newest independent state in Africa. Like the hopes many African states had in the 60s and 70s of gaining independence from colonial rule, so was that of South Sudan. The hope that self-rule was going to mark the beginning of good things to come for the periphery countries and its teeming population quickly ignited series of nationalist movements and bred leaders who not only sabotaged the continued efforts of the colonial overlords to keep holding forth their respective colonies but put wilful pressures on colonial structures which led firstly to decolonisation and ultimately independence.

It was hoped and believed that at the turn of independence, self-rule would transform the continent into one filled with socio-economic development, credible democracy and a total commitment to the uplift of the people. This however failed to yield any meaningful result. Hopes of a brighter tomorrow were soon shattered as gloom set in. The Congo became the first casualty while more than half of all African countries which had newly gained their independence went either into a civil war or found itself overthrown by blood thirsty and gun wielding military men. Africa since then had known no peace. It was in the light of this, amidst the decade long sufferings South Sudan had faced over time that it was thought a separate country was needed to be carved out to give the people a new lease of life and breathe of fresh air. Anyone who had lived in Sudan in the last two to three decades and knew well the historical evolution of that part of the former Sudan would agree that its people had suffered a great deal in the hands of its northern neighbours, such that the only solution to a lasting peace was to grant that part of the country swift independence. However, no one would have envisaged that two years into South Sudan’s independence; it would fall into crisis which appears to threaten its very foundation.

As a landlocked country, South Sudan is among the world’s most impoverished country with less than one per cent of its population having access to electricity. Despite being the third-largest oil exporter in sub-Saharan Africa after Nigeria and Angola, the new nation is not only awash with guns after a long battle with Khartoum, but has been grappling with corruption and lawlessness since independence. The current crisis

in South Sudan is perceived to have both ethnic and political dimensions. The current president, Salva Kiir is from the Dinka ethnic group, the country's largest, while his main rival and former Vice President, Riek Machar belongs to the Nuer ethnic group, the country's second largest. This ethnic rivalry forms part of the current crisis bedeviling the country with each group systematically killing one another in their respective places of domicile. The political angle to the crisis which has seen tensions rise between Kiir and Machar since July of this year stems from the latter's intention to win the leadership of the ruling party ahead of presidential elections in 2015. This quickly led to his sacking by Kiir and his cabinet. The political tension soon snowballed when Kiir accused Machar of attempting a coup on the 15th of December, a situation which saw the arrest of opposition figures and former cabinet members.

Apart from the fact that the crisis have left hundreds dead, the number of people displaced as a result of the crisis has tripled to about 81,000 with the number increasing by the day. Also, the United Nations has asked for another 5,500 troops from other UN missions in Africa to complement the 7,000 already deployed across the country. It is saddening that the African continent has failed to learn from history and have therefore consumed by its lack of it. When other countries of the world are seeking ways to better the lot of its people and move their country towards growth and development, African countries wallow in ethnic and political rivalry. It is disheartening to find a country that had come out of a long period of turmoil engaging in the same crisis that gave them life support. It is only hoped things will return to normalcy soon. With the entire crisis bedeviling many African states today, no country has been able to hold its head up high than the Nigerian state in terms of managing conflicts and civil disobedience in all guises. Since the 1967 civil war, Nigeria has been in a state of precipice. There have been over a very long time talks about Nigeria's disintegration. The most saddening part of it came from the United States which noted, like a prophet of doom, that Nigeria would cease to exist by 2015. Locally, a lot of rabble-rousing and threatening voices have sprung up, especially in the Niger-Delta region where predictions of a possible breakup of Nigeria would take place if their 'son' is denied a second term in office. The country is not new to such threats of disintegration. For those who are historically conscious, both the Northern and Western regions had at some point called for secession. It would only take the audacity of the late Ojukwu to make good such threats which of course failed in its entirety to solve the Nigerian Question. This open call of secession or outright appeal for disintegration has continued unabated and the loud tones could still be heard across the country. With the current political imbroglio brewing among the political elites, it remains to be seen what 2015 will look like.

The Nigeria state is gradually failing if the face-off between a former president and the incumbent is anything to go by. The face-off comes at a time when many Nigerians are deeply worried at the direction the country is going. The industrial strike embarked by most government owned institutions, the massive looting of the treasury, the harrowing insecurity problem, unemployment among others show gloomy signs that all is not well with the country. In fact, the country today faces an unprecedented socio-political and economic cancer which threatens its very foundation. However, despite these seeming problems, this writer believes secession or threats of disintegration are not the decisive solution we need both as a people and country. The event in South Sudan and elsewhere should serve as a lesson for those who think dividing Nigeria on either religious or ethnic lines would solve all the problems we face as a people. We are a people with so much anger and are wont to unleash it at the slightest provocation. Our nature is very unpredictable and unstable such that we do not have a collective consciousness that drives nationalism, patriotism and love for even our neighbour. The fact that our thinking has been streamlined over time to pursue personal aggrandisement makes nonsense of whatever lesson the Good Samaritan story portrays. Our inability to pursue what binds us together and see the demerits of what divides us is perhaps the major reason we have failed to move forward and therefore, lost faith in the country. However, in as much as the country does not hold much to be desired and its leaders failing outright to fulfill their own part of the social contract, we must not crave as a people for disintegration or break-up of the country. There is no denying the fact that a growing division, not among the different ethnic groupings within the country this time around, exist within ethnic groups of the same historical consciousness. The Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa-Fulani, Ijaw among others, have shown within themselves and overtime that they cannot put their

house in order. The Yoruba for example, may have achieved some level of socio-political development over the years but when it comes to pursuing a common goal, you find them fanning the embers of discord with each sub-group claiming some unknown rights and privileges. The Igbo on the other hand have failed to realise that they hold so much hope for the betterment and uplift of the country, yet they revel in personal fame and wealth which to them is the hallmarks of a fulfilled Igbo man. Until the Igbo take away their parochialism and embrace unity as a viable weapon for political mobilisation, they may never rise beyond the cocoon they have been placed by some elements within the country.

Despite the predictions by prophets of doom that Nigeria will cease to exist in 2015, the country appears stronger than what many believe. In fact, Nigeria is better off being Nigeria than becoming a hopeless disintegrated entity which in the long run may end up being another Somalia. For those who believe a divided Nigeria is the very best option for the survival of the various ethnic groupings in the country should have a rethink. An Arewa, Biafra, Oduduwa or Ijaw state portends grave dangers for the people within such state structures. The history of power struggles, power grab, ethnic tensions and lack of cohesion African states and its people are known for would once again creep into a divided Nigeria, tearing it further apart. It is the belief of this writer that no matter what Nigeria faces as a country today, it forms part of our developmental process for no nation great today was built in a day. Simply put, our fragile agglomeration suits us better than a divided one!

As the crisis in South Sudan continues, the lesson we must learn therefore, is that disunity breeds nothing but further bloodshed. Those who call for division do not understand the pains and horror of war and think it is going to take a smooth transmission. Events in South Sudan paint this sad picture of a path we must not be willing to follow. The political elites must realise that the Nigerian state may not be able to hold itself for long if the massive disconnect between the ruler and ruled continues. It is therefore imperative that a workable solution is engineered in order to remove the pangs of mutual distrust that has remained part of us since the days of amalgamation. Those who fail to learn from history are condemned by it. South Sudan is a reminder and example of this apt truth.

OPINION: South Sudan must resolve ethnic conflicts to be a nation at peace (The Washington Post)

By Abdul Mohammed and Alex de Waal, There is an opportunity to halt South Sudan's slide into war and state failure, but it must be seized within days or it will be lost. This requires the leaders of South Sudan to rise above narrow, tribalistic, zero-sum politics and develop a national program. President Salva Kiir and other members of the country's political elite — in government and in opposition, inside South Sudan and in the diaspora — must respond to this challenge now or go down in history as having betrayed their people.

Nine years ago, on Jan. 9, 2005, the Sudanese government and the southern-based Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) signed a historic peace accord that brought an end to more than 20 years of war between northern and southern Sudan. That agreement culminated in a referendum, held from Jan. 9 to Jan. 15, 2011, in which the southern Sudanese voted overwhelmingly for independence. Africa and the international community welcomed the new Republic of South Sudan, hopeful that it would put this history of strife and suffering behind it.

But the peace agreement and the show of unity around independence masked many unhealed wounds. During those long years of civil war, the South Sudanese weren't united, and their divisions exploded into a bloody internecine conflict in 1991 after SPLM officers challenged the leadership of Col. John Garang. The strife became a tribal war, mainly between ethnic Dinka and ethnic Nuer, involving massacres of civilians on both sides and mass starvation. The atrocities left deep scars.

For the following decade, leaders of churches and civil society and friends from abroad, including U.S. representatives, undertook a painstaking effort at "people-to-people peace" among South Sudanese communities. This task was incomplete when the 2005 north-south peace agreement was signed. Amid the euphoria of that peace and the work of reconstructing a war-ravaged land, President Kiir, who took over

after Garang died in a helicopter crash in July 2005 , neglected to continue the necessary work of reconciliation. Instead, the wait for independence and plentiful oil revenues maintained a semblance of unity.

It is those unhealed wounds that are tearing South Sudan apart today.

Two years after achieving independence, a political dispute between President Kiir and Vice President Riek Machar erupted into the open. Kiir dismissed Machar and most of his cabinet. Two weeks ago, this dispute suddenly mutated from a contest over votes in the ruling bodies of the SPLM into a terrifyingly violent tribal conflict. The speed and vigor of ethnic mobilization not only threatens a widening war but also jeopardizes the very viability of the South Sudanese state.

African and international mediators are in a race against time to stem this tide. Once the political dispute descends completely into a fight for communal survival, foreign leverage disappears. Ethiopia and Kenya, acting on behalf of African nations, took key steps at a summit in Nairobi Friday to try to stop further violence. They called for a cease-fire and for the rights of 11 high-level political leaders arrested by the government to be respected. (Two were released on Saturday.) They affirmed the core African principles: no unconstitutional change in government and South Sudan must build a viable state. President Kiir stays, but he must negotiate.

Stopping the shooting is the immediate priority. But the mediators should not be content with patching together a ruling coalition and returning to business as usual in advance of scheduled elections in 2015. A power-sharing formula could become just another division of the spoils, and elections could become another exercise in ethnic division.

For too long, South Sudan's leaders evaded their responsibilities by blaming their woes on the war and oppressive policies of the government in Khartoum. Now, having joined the club of nations, they must play by its rules. The United States, having given South Sudan the benefit of many doubts, is threatening to withhold aid if power is seized or held by force. That is quite correct. Any political process must take into account South Sudan's unique and painful history. The biggest task is an all-inclusive national discussion on what it means to be a nation. The political elites should listen to the wisdom of pastors and civil society leaders, who are insisting that the politicians return to the path of dialogue and healing. The road to a viable state lies in national reconciliation.

The elites inherited vast natural wealth and boundless international good will following the historic referendum, but they squandered both. They lapsed into a culture of corruption, conspicuous personal consumption and tribalistic political machinations. They have not been serious about democratization, institution-building or even the most basic service delivery, which they have preferred to outsource to foreign relief agencies.

African leaders — backed by the United States and United Nations — have taken key steps toward pressuring South Sudan's leaders to stop the war. But the deeper responsibility for creating a South Sudanese nation at peace with itself lies with the country's own leaders.

EDITORIAL: The Central African Republic and South Sudan need to seek peace (Cleveland)

The international community must do all it can to pull both the Central African Republic and South Sudan from the brink of civil war.

The world seems to be getting the message: United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon is calling for **more peacekeepers in South Sudan** while the U.N., the African Union and France are already on the ground in the CAR. Everyone, including the United States, which is trying to get its citizens out of South Sudan, is urging leaders in both countries to seek peace. It may be working in South Sudan where President Salva Kiir has tentatively accepted a truce.

It's not an easy sell. **Clashes** between Christian and Muslim militias in CAR, a former French colony, have been escalating since Seleka, a Muslim militia, ousted President Francois Bozize from power in March, saying he had failed to abide by a peace agreement.

And in South Sudan, Kiir dismissed his key rival, former Vice President Riek Machar in July, and sparked street battles in the fledgling nation, which gained its independence from Sudan in 2011.

Kiir, a member of the Dinka, the largest ethnic group in South Sudan, sacked Machar, a member of the Nuer ethnic group, in a power struggle that has left more than 500 people dead, according to the United Nations.

Vicious revenge killings, rapes and other atrocities have caused thousands to flee their homes in both countries.

Unfortunately, violence has become the norm in both countries. Coups have been the bane of the Central African Republic since it gained independence in 1960.

And South Sudan, which fought for decades against Sudan's Muslim government, has known war far longer than it has known peace.

Yet the world dare not ignore these distant brutalities. The genocide in Rwanda nearly 20 years ago started in just this manner: one ethnic group, Hutus, mowing down another, Tutsis, as well as fellow Hutus who protested the slaughter. Before long, a stunned world looked up and saw nearly 1 million corpses.

The United Nations must keep making the case for peace and warning that political, ethnic and militia leaders will be held responsible for atrocities. Samantha Power, U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, visited both countries recently to proclaim that message.

The leaders of the Central African Republic and South Sudan must find the strength to back away from the brink, for the good of their people.

Rachel Marsden: U.S. role in South Sudan more geopolitical than humanitarian (Anchorage Daily News)

By RACHEL MARSDEN December 29, 2013 - By the looks of it, U.S. President Barack Obama may be close to joining the French in taking on the Chinese -- in Africa.

According to my sources in the French government, Obama made it clear to both British and French leadership at the onset of his presidency that he was going to leave it to them to protect unstable African countries while he focused on Sino-American relations. Perhaps Obama realizes that Africa is just an extension of China's backyard.

In a letter to Congress, Obama wrote, "I may take further action to support the security of U.S. citizens, personnel, and property, including our embassy, in South Sudan." Obama also indicated in the letter that 46 U.S. troops were deployed to evacuate Americans in the region.

The tribal infighting currently plaguing the world's newest country, which only officially obtained its independence in 2011, presents an opportunity to reset the geopolitical chessboard. But the question is whether it's worth it.

We're not in the 1980s anymore. North America is almost entirely energy-independent, so the protection of potential energy resources is no longer a motivational factor for the U.S. Much like Syria, which was ultimately tossed to the Russians for safekeeping, countries such as South Sudan have become little more than geopolitical bargaining chips for America.

Granted, there is considerable incentive for the U.S. to compete with China for new defense-client nations. But the most direct benefit of America's Third World forays these days is in having another superpower -- such as China or Russia -- give up something else of value in order for America to eventually buzz off. And China would love for America to buzz off from South Sudan.

The region has been described as "oil-rich," and it relies almost exclusively on oil exports for its economic welfare. But the fact is, almost all of South Sudan's oil belongs to China. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, 80 percent of Sudan and South Sudan oil was exported to China in 2012. Western nations received none.

If 99 percent of South Sudan's revenues come from oil, then China literally owns the country. Of the three South Sudanese oil consortia, China owns 40 percent of the Greater Nile Petroleum Operating Company and 41 percent of the Dar Petroleum Operating Company. The Nile Petroleum Company, which owns 42 percent of the consortium in which China doesn't explicitly figure, describes itself as "the commercial arm

of (South Sudan's) Ministry of Petroleum and Mining." But a 2006 WikiLeaks cable from the U.S. Embassy in Khartoum, Sudan, to the State Department shows considerable Chinese investment in NilePet: "Shaanxi Yan Chang Petroleum Group (SYC): SYC is a partnership between the Provincial Government of Shaanxi and Yan Chang International, Ltd. (YCI), a Hong Kong-based company. NilePet signed an (agreement) with SYC ... in November 2005. (China) is also preparing a feasibility study for the design, construction and operation of a ... refinery in the south and is interested in the production of liquefied natural gas."

In 2011, the News Agency of South Sudan announced that China was donating \$25.6 million to "support agriculture, education, health and water supply projects." The same year, the South Sudanese press announced that the Communist Party of China had supplied 120 computers and 20 printers to the ruling Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) party, which responded by pointing out that China had also offered "training to the SPLM party in China." In 2011, China announced that it was loaning South Sudan \$158 million so that China Harbour Engineering Company could develop Juba airport.

Under most circumstances, China's influence would make South Sudan a hard target for Western nations, but the West has been able to gain a foothold under the guise of security or humanitarian interventionism. Further working in the West's favor is the fact that it's directly next door to the Central African Republic, where the French are currently leading an effort to protect the majority Christian population from a minority Islamic guerrilla onslaught.

But let's face it: There's an underlying economic impetus beneath efforts to calm the tribal and religious turmoil in African countries. There has to be. There's no other reason for a country like France to invest so heavily in matters so far away from home. Europe needs oil. So does China. And therein lies the reason that both countries are currently neck-deep in African conflicts -- albeit with different strategies. Europe waits for an opening before moving in under the guise of humanitarianism or security. China, by contrast, just opens its wallet and buys its way in. The world tends to only take note of the former, even though the latter maneuver is every bit as effective.

None of this is of pragmatic concern to an energy-independent America. Unless, of course, it's looking to secure a future playground for defense contractors, or a negotiating chip to use against China in the larger global game.

Rachel Marsden is a columnist, political strategist and former Fox News host based in Paris. She appears frequently on TV and in publications in the U.S. and abroad.

TOBY LANZER: 'We must stand by the people of South Sudan' (Aljazeera)

Toby Lanzer - When South Sudan hosted its first investment conference on December 4 and 5, humanitarians were excited at the prospect that the country was on the right track for lifting its 12 million people out of poverty and want. We were also excited that the investment conference's agenda chimed with our recently launched Strategic Response Plan for 2014-2016, which unveiled an innovative new direction for humanitarian action while seeking \$1.1bn to meet the needs of the most vulnerable 3.1 million people across the country in 2014.

Our new humanitarian approach was informed by evidence on the ground which showed an improvement in the humanitarian situation on several fronts in 2013, with overall needs reducing for the first time since 2011. The arrival of refugees and returnees from Sudan had slowed. The impact of inter-communal violence, while still a cause for concern, also decreased. Food security improved for many South Sudanese, although the number of people deemed severely food insecure remained worryingly high. With this in mind, we were of the view that South Sudan had turned a corner. Aid organisations developed a three-year strategy combining life-saving relief and preparedness for future shocks with strengthening of national capacity, thereby laying the groundwork for sustainable development. Our goal was to link our work with South Sudan's development aspirations and enable people to reap the fruits of their hard-earned political independence.

Therefore, at the beginning of December, we were approaching 2014 filled with hope. Little did we, or any others, know that things would fall apart in less than a week and that we would be faced with one of the largest emerging humanitarian crises in the world. Despite the rapid deterioration in the situation, aid agencies were able to cope with the immediate consequences of the crisis. As part of their dry season contingency planning, humanitarians had pre-positioned supplies in strategic hubs across the country in anticipation of the violence that has been recurrent over the years, especially in Jonglei State. These stocks have enabled us to launch a rapid life-saving response operation reaching tens of thousands of civilians in UN mission bases and elsewhere across the country. But the emergency stocks are insufficient to meet the massive increase in needs arising from this new crisis. We are already aware of over 180,000 people who have been displaced so far. The real scale of displacement is likely much greater, with thousands of vulnerable people thought to have fled into the bush, where aid agencies cannot currently reach them. The number will continue to grow if the political crisis does not stop. It has been a devastating 13 days for South Sudan. This is the time for political leaders to demonstrate leadership by prioritising peace and security, ensuring the protection of civilians according to international law. South Sudan stands on the precipice of losing the economic prospects sown in the past two years. If violence does not stop now, its people will be plunged into an uncertain and difficult future.

For humanitarian organisations - United Nations and NGOs alike - this is the time to stay, protect and deliver. We must stand by the people of South Sudan at this extremely difficult time and provide impartial and neutral life-saving aid. Humanitarians estimate that \$166m is required immediately to assist hundreds of thousands of people in urgent need of life-saving aid. We are calling on the donor community to ensure that non-governmental organisations and UN agencies have the resources - including humanitarian managers, specialists, and supplies such as medicines, water and sanitation equipment, blankets, and shelter and food - to ensure that we can meet the most basic and urgent lifesaving needs of what is quickly evolving to affect not tens of thousands, but I suspect, hundreds of thousands of people.

The humanitarian community remains optimistic that the vision in our Strategic Response Plan, linking short term aid to long term development, and the interest expressed by international investors to transform South Sudan's potential into a vibrant economy, is not entirely lost. But to get back on the right track, South Sudan's political leaders must urgently find each other in peaceful dialogue and seek a solution to the political crisis. The alternative is to allow the situation to continue to spin in the wrong direction, with endless strife and massive loss of lives. That cannot be on the minds of any responsible leader, and I hate to think that it is part of what the next few weeks will bring.

Toby Lanzer is the UN Humanitarian Coordinator in South Sudan.

South Sudan: the Nairobi IGAD meeting turns complicated matters into more complicated ones (Current Analyst)

Many turned to be hopeless observers. This leaves only one serious player at the centre of the ring : President Museveni of Uganda . And the whole thing was indeed an almost pure piece of Ugandan diplomacy . How successful in the long run , this remains to be seen . But in the short run , it was masterful . Riak Machar , who is a pet peeve of the Ugandan President , was “*dealt with*” , Ugandan troops have already been spotted in the fighting for Malakal , others are up in Wau , preparing for an attack on Bentiu...

Something Went Wrong in Nairobi

What happened on Friday December 27th in Nairobi is an astonishing spectacle . The whole show was supposed to enable ex-Vice-President's Riak Machar's “rebels” and President Salva Kiir's “legitimate government” to open a dialogue in a proper environment . But things started pretty badly from the word “go” . First of all , none of the political detainees from South Sudan were there , in spite of the preparatory visit to Juba the previous day by Ethiopian Prime Minister Haile Mariam Dessalegn and Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta . The vague promises made to them did not materialize and none of the imprisoned ministers/politicians had been freed and allowed to travel to Nairobi . Riak Machar was not there either and there was nobody representing him . Mrs Rebecca Nyandeng , John Garang's widow , who had been

released from house arrest three days before , was in Nairobi but was not allowed to take part. As for Salva Kiir , he was the only absent head of state (even Hassan Sheikh Mahmood the President of the shadowy Somali “government” , was present) , as if the fate of his own country was of no concern to him . He was represented by his Minister of Foreign Affairs , Barnaba Marial Benjamin , a Nuer , probably to give an impression of ethnic balance. And , more ominously , the North Sudanese delegation was headed by Bakri Hassan Saleh who , since the last reshuffle in Khartoum , is emerging more and more as the real boss of what is left of the Sudan.

As a result the “dialogue of the stakeholders” mooted by the final Communiqué was in fact basically a monologue , with the IGAD heads of State talking to themselves . But if there was no dialogue , even in spite of the announcement that the absent South Sudanese government “was ready for immediately beginning unconditional dialogue with the stakeholders” , what then did happen ? Well , basically a reading of the riot act : “if hostilities do not cease within four days of this communiqué , the Summit will consider taking further measures”. Which obviously means : “Mr Riak Machar , you’d better fold in immediately or else (according to President Museveni’s favourite formula) “you will be dealt with”. Does this mean that in four days , a variety of IGAD troops are going to start pouring on South Sudanese soil to restore the physical control of President Salva Kiir’s government over the whole national territory ? Probably not , since among the various actors present very few were in any position to do anything . ([Read More](#))

OPINION: South Sudan Learnt Nothing From Kenya and Rwanda (The Star, Kenya)

BY KOIGI WAMWERE, As we open the new year of 2014, amidst a clamor by African presidents that they should never be prosecuted for crimes against humanity, world’s newest country South Sudan is burning in the fire of negative ethnicity as if drawn into it by an irresistible death wish.

Though many people have warned against dangers of negative ethnicity, many African countries continue to ignore the monster.

Consequently many have exploded as has South Sudan now and those which have not, instead of guarding against a similar eventuality, they laugh at the victim, as wood in the drying rack laughs at the wood in the fire.

As is typical of victims of negative ethnicity everywhere, in South Sudan, the Nuers are blaming Dinkas for their problems and Dinkas are blaming the Nuers for disturbing their turn to eat.

But why did South Sudanese not learn their lesson from Rwanda or Kenya’s post-election violence? Why are they not able to discern the guile and false promises of negative ethnicity when it comes to them as a saviour? Is it because they do not understand the dragon or how it works?

The worst thing is when Africans and foreign friends live in the denial that negative ethnicity is the ideology that is burning South Sudan and most of Africa. A disease denied cannot be treated.

Negative ethnicity is neither ethnicity nor positive ethnicity that rightly celebrates our ethnic roots and ethnic diversity. Negative ethnicity is hate of others from other communities that we more popularly call tribalism.

Negative ethnicity that we fatally embrace is related to anti-Semitism and racism but Europeans, Americans and South Africans spend more time fighting their evil ideologies than Africans spend fighting theirs.

When ethnic elites are not at each other’s throat, they will look within their community for clans and tribesmen in other regions to fight.

Negative ethnicity was a tool of colonial conquest that British ruling minorities used to divide and rule their colonial subject majorities in Africa and Asia.

In Sudan, the Arabic North Sudan used negative ethnicity to divide Africans in the South. After independence, African elites did not eradicate but perpetuated negative ethnicity as a tool of scrambling for power and resources. But this scramble was bound to come to a head as it has now.

Much as Africans tried to free themselves from the comb-web of negative ethnicity, they have failed because capitalism, the system of unbridled greed and the Machiavellian principle of “the end justifies the means” has converted most African leaders into demagogues of negative ethnicity to attain or retain power.

Everywhere negative ethnicity operates against nationalism, idealism and multi-ethnic nation. As Samora Machel mourned that the tribe had killed the nation of Mozambique, in Kenya, patriots also mourn that the tribe has killed the nation.

The modus operandi of negative ethnicity is division, war and balkanisation of the nation. Right now, unless the Nuer military forces are quickly defeated by the Dinka military forces or a political solution to the problems is quickly found, South Sudan might balkanise into a Nuer South Sudan and a Dinka South Sudan.

In Africa, wars of negative ethnicity have killed more people than those killed by any other ideology. Thanks to negative ethnicity, Africa has witnessed ethnic civil wars, massacres and genocides in DR Congo, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Rwanda, Burundi, Mali, Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and now South Sudan. In Somalia, clanism – a mutation of negative ethnicity – has destroyed the whole country.

In most of Africa, negative ethnicity has become the ideology of politics, religion, government, counties, emotions, love etc. We even think with negative ethnicity, not minds. In Rwanda they call negative ethnicity the ideology of genocide.

Its theatres of operation include churches, institutions of learning, political parties, government ministries, public and private companies, media, police and army.

As the ideology of devolution, in Kenya and South Sudan, negative ethnicity has turned counties into ethnic enclaves wherein citizens are people from majority communities and foreigners are those from minority communities. With the country split between citizens and foreigners, jobs and business contracts will go to citizens and crumbs to foreigners.

Surprisingly, negative ethnicity has strength because it comes to communities, never as an enemy, but as an ally, friend and saviour from ethnic enemies. Where negative ethnicity engenders ethnic discrimination, its beneficiaries always stand by it.

Negative ethnicity has given Africa its worst leaders. Rather than pick the best leadership, it dictates election of the best soldiers of the tribe rather than the best servants of the nation.

And though masses of ordinary people are the worst victims of negative ethnicity, due to their poverty of ideas, they are its greatest propagators. Instead of seeing themselves as poor workers and farmers, they see themselves as communities and enemies of other communities.

In Kenya, instead of working for ethnic equality, negative ethnicity glorifies tyranny of ethnic numbers. Unfortunately, this legitimisation of ethnic domination makes nonsense of national unity – 'we are one'. Ethnic minorities and majorities cannot be one.

Under President Kibaki, tyranny of ethnic numbers grew by leaps and bounds. It won an election and now forms a government of two communities.

In seemingly stable African countries, ethnic elites reconcile by sharing resources and use the divided ethnic masses to reach top of the food chain.

In ethnically-divided African countries, individuals cannot advocate political accommodation of other communities without being labelled traitors, just like moderate Hutus in Rwanda during the 1984 genocide.

To eradicate negative ethnicity, South Sudan needs a leader like President Nyerere of Tanzania. And as she learns she cannot survive divided by negative ethnicity, African countries that have not exploded yet must learn from her and Rwanda.

The White Army: An Introduction and Overview (Small Arms Survey Sudan)

By John Young - [Read on pdf - online](#) {Ctrl+Click}

OPINION: A Proven Strategy To End Conflict In South Sudan (Gurtong)

By Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Kulwant Singh and Dr. David Leffler, A new technology of defense is now available that has been scientifically shown to prevent war and create peace by harnessing the deepest level of nature's functioning.

War is ultimately a human problem requiring a human solution. Experts in the field of conflict resolution maintain that the underlying cause of war is accumulated "social stress" - i.e., mounting political, religious and/or ethnic tensions between rival factions in critical hotspots throughout the world. As social stress builds, divisions grow stronger, groups take sides, diplomats become unable to resolve differences, and enemies arise within or outside the nation. Military force may then be invoked to protect the country, resulting in armed conflict and unpredictable outcomes. But even if conflict temporarily solves the problem for the victor, the social stress remains, fueling future cycles of conflict. In contrast, the absence of collective stress translates into the absence of tension between competing sides, thereby reducing the probability of hostilities.

Today, the military of the South Sudan has an opportunity to overcome the cycle of war by deploying a scientifically verified technology of defense that neutralizes social stress. This new technology is based on the unified field of all the laws of nature - the most fundamental and powerful level of nature's functioning. The technology accesses and enlivens this unified field through subjective technologies of consciousness, thereby creating a profound influence of coherence and harmony throughout society that results in measurable reductions of crime, terrorism, and war.

The late Maharishi Mahesh Yogi revived systematic subjective technologies for experiencing the unified field, including the Transcendental Meditation program and its advanced techniques. When used in a military context these meditation practices are known as Invincible Defence Technology (IDT). They have been successfully applied by members of many faiths to eliminate conflict. Other militaries in the African region like Mozambique have already applied these non-lethal and non-destructive technologies to reduce collective societal stress and resulting conflict.

Over 50 research studies confirm that when the required threshold of IDT experts is crossed - approximately the square root of 1% of a given population - crime goes down, quality of life indices go up, and war and terrorism abate. Scientists have named this phenomenon the Maharishi Effect, since Maharishi Mahesh Yogi first predicted it. The causal mechanism appears to be a field effect of consciousness - a spillover effect on the level of the unified field from the peace-creating group into the larger population. ([Read More](#))