

UN Peacekeeping Operations

Challenges and Prospects in South Sudan

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A country which has one birth every 1.63 minute and one death every 4.62 minute, with an approximate population of 11 million plus (estimated, as last official census was by Sudan in 2008), of which 8.3 million (including 4.4 million children) need humanitarian assistance, needs more than good governance to prevent utter collapse. This article explores the drivers of conflict in South Sudan and the peacekeeping challenges that the UN Mission in South Sudan faces, especially at a time when the country is preparing for long-pending elections, post formation of a revitalized government, which is by itself a proportional mix of various warring factions. The article posits that an integrated effort from traditional friends of South Sudan like the Troika (Norway, UK, Ireland), AU, EU, and other agencies, in the domains of SSR and DDR, legal structures, funding for capacity-building, election process, etc., combined with effective peacekeeping by UNMISS and implementation of the four key pillars of the mandate is necessary for a stable future.

Keywords: *UN Peacekeeping; South Sudan, UNMISS*

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'If Protection could be a human being, we would have try any means to bring him to stay with us here in PoC, because we are extremely distracted for extend that sleepiness run away from our eyes.'

Fatima, resident of PoC, Bentiu¹

South Sudan fares poorly on many socio-economic parameters and is one of the poorest countries of the world. It covers an area of 2,39,285 square miles and the population is around 11.2 million, one-fifth of which is internally displaced. As per UN reports, in 2023, 9.4 million—76 per cent of South Sudan's population—may need humanitarian aid. An estimated 7.8 million people may face food insecurity, with many facing catastrophic conditions, including more than 1.2 million children under age five facing acute malnutrition. With recent crises in neighbouring Sudan, increased influx of refugees into South Sudan has further exacerbated food scarcity and violence.

The aim of this article is to understand the drivers of conflict in South Sudan and explore the peacekeeping challenges faced by the UN Mission in South Sudan, especially at a time when the country is preparing for long-pending elections, post formation of a revitalised government, which is by itself a proportional mix of various warring factions.

BACKGROUND TO THE CONFLICT

South Sudan is a landlocked country in Central East Africa that gained independence from Sudan after decades of civil war, which ended in a referendum in which 98.3 per cent of those who participated voted for a separate nation. In July 2011, South Sudan became the newest country in the World, bordered by Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Sudan, Republic of Congo and Central African Republic. The people of South Sudan are predominantly Africans who are mostly Christians or follow traditional African religions. The largest ethnic group is the Dinka, which constitute about two-fifths of the population, followed by the Nuer, which constitute about one-fifth. Other groups include the Zande, the Bari, the Shilluk and the Anywa (Anwak). There is a small Arab population in South Sudan. The Dinka are mostly cattle-herders and can be found throughout much of the country, while the Shilluk are more-settled farmers and, like the Anywa, are concentrated in the east, although they too can also be found in other parts of South Sudan. The Nuer are concentrated in the centre-northeast of the country, while the Bari live farther south, not far from

the border with Uganda. The Zande live in the southwest, close to the border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The peace and stability that followed the creation of a new state was soon shattered in 2013 when supporters of President Salva Kiir Mayardit of Dinka community and Vice President Riek Machar of Nuer community clashed resulting in a tragic civil war for the next two years.² The relationship between the government and the UN body, United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), deteriorated rapidly with movement of UNMISS personnel being restricted at various locations. Large-scale displacement of populace and human rights violations were reported even as the refugee crisis went beyond control—9,00,000 internally displaced people of which 1,67,000 crossed the country's borders by February 2014. Around 85,000 civilians, fleeing from violence, reported to the UNMISS camps at eight locations, leading to the setting up of the Protection of Civilian (POC) sites and a revision of UNMISS mandate for increased troop and police strength. More details of UNMISS will be covered in the next section.

A peace agreement (Cessation of Hostilities Agreement) and establishment of ceasefire Monitoring and Verification Mechanism under the aegis of The Horn of Africa regional body (Intergovernmental Authority on Development [IGAD]) in 2014 between the two leaders saw a transitional government being formed in 2016, with Salva Kiir as the President and a few vice presidents from various communities. Riek Machar, being in exile, was represented by his wife and other leaders. Machar's return in 2016 and the violence that followed soon after derailed the peace process while simultaneously hinting that the peace accord between Kiir and Machar did not address the concerns of more than 64 ethnic groups and that there were factions within Dinka and Nuer, with cross allegiances. The year 2016 also saw widespread atrocities being committed even against international aid workers even by government forces. In one such incident in July 2016, approximately 50 government soldiers broke into Terrain Hotel in Juba where humanitarian workers were housed and sexually assaulted a few international aid workers after murdering a local journalist.³

In September 2018, another peace agreement called the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) (now called Revitalized Peace Agreement) was signed under the close involvement of two neighbouring peace negotiators, Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir and Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni.⁴ The Revitalized Peace Agreement was signed between the government—the Transitional

Government of National Unity (TGoNU), the main opposition (South Sudanese People's Liberation Movement/Army-In Opposition—SPLM/A-IO), the South Sudan Opposition Alliance (SSOA), Former Detainees (FD), and Other Opposition Parties (OPP). The agreement lays out power sharing in the national legislature in the ratio 60:23:9: 6:2 (332, 128, 50, 30, and 10 members respectively, totalling 550 members), and in the ministerial council, positions are shared 20 to TGoNU, 9 to SPLM/A-IO, 2 to FD, and 1 to OPP.⁵

On 22 February 2020, the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity (RTGoNU) was formed, which had long been provided for under Chapter 1 of the Revitalized Peace Agreement. The process of transition till elections and adherence to various clauses is being monitored by the Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (RJMEC) and Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring and Verification Mechanism (CTSAMVM). Peace has been fragile ever since, even as attempts have been made by international organisations and groups like Community of Sant 'Egidio to strengthen the democratic process and protect civilian life. A large percentage of the population is still internally displaced, of which more than a million is living in Protection of Civilian (POC) camps run by the United Nations.

PROBABLE FUTURES

In an article for the *World Politics Review* in December 2013, Richard Gowan outlined three possible scenarios for UNMISS in response to the crisis:

1. **Fragile success:** The Mission will manage to hold together militarily long enough for more-or-less sincere political talks to end the violence.
2. **Prolonged agony:** UNMISS muddles through in the face of half-hearted negotiations and spasmodic but serious violence, trying to save as many lives as possible.
3. **Decisive failure:** The fragmentation and rout of UNMISS after repeated attacks on its bases, personnel, and convoys.

In the present context, post revitalized actions, 'Fragile Success' seems a more probable scenario, which can change to 'Glimmer of Hope', once the entire roadmap as envisaged in the revitalized Peace Agreement is implemented, and other steps as part of SSR and DDR are accomplished.

Ethnic animosity, economic collapse and institutional inertia must be overcome with collective, grassroots level actions and complete involvement of all parties. Delayed implementation of timelines of Peace Agreement, rebel leaders yet to join the revitalised Peace Agreement, and intercommunal clashes triggered by livestock migration, are some of the many debilitating factors which prevent return of long-lasting peace. The Revised National Development Strategy 2021–2024, though well drafted with linkages to SDG goals and Africa Agenda 2063, fails to clearly establish how South Sudan will survive without international aid, which it calls a *triple nexus approach* encouraging stronger collaboration and coordination among actors from the fields of development cooperation, humanitarian action, and peacebuilding.⁶ A country which has one birth every 1.63 minute and one death every 4.62 minute, with an approximate population of 11 million plus (estimated, as last official census was by Sudan in 2008), of which 8.3 million (including 4.4 million children) need humanitarian assistance, needs more than good governance to prevent utter collapse.⁷ Even as the revitalized Agreement mandates 35 per cent women participation in the peace process, data indicates 8 per cent literacy amongst women folk who comprise almost 50 per cent of the population, with majority of the conflict and gender related violence being committed against them. Ranked 185 in the Human Development Index with 82 per cent population classified ‘poor’, this country needs collective assistance and will, from all corners, to prevent the return of a future of ‘Prolonged agony’ or ‘Decisive failure’.

THE UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN SOUTH SUDAN (UNMISS)

‘Peace doesn’t just happen. It cannot be wished or willed into existence. It has to be made, it has to be fought for, it needs its own warriors.’

Nicholas Haysom, SRSG, UNMISS

The UNMISS was established in 2011 to help build peace and stability in the newly independent country. Prior to that, there was United Nations Mission In Sudan (UNMIS), which functioned from 2005 to monitor and support the Troika (Norway, UK and Ireland) mediated Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the Government of Sudan and South Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/ Army (SPLM/A).

Deployed number of personnel as of June 2022



17,954

Total personnel



2,268 Civilians



200 Experts on Mission



1,468 Police



389 Staff Officer



13,221 Troops



408 UN Volunteers

Authorised number of personnel



19,101

Total uniformed personnel



17,000 Military personnel *



2,101 Police personnel



An appropriate civilian component

Figure 1 Deployment of uniformed troops

Source: 'UNMISS Fact Sheet', United Nations Peacekeeping, available at <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/mission/unmiss>

One of the core objectives of UNMISS is to protect civilians, who have suffered from years of conflict and violence. The military component of UNMISS, with a strength of 13,610 personnel, is presently headed by an Indian, Lieutenant General Mohan Subramanian.⁸ The UN Security Council has mandated UNMISS to carry out tasks in four key areas: protection of civilians; creation of conditions conducive to the delivery of humanitarian assistance; support for implementation of the Revitalized Agreement and the Peace Process; and monitoring, investigating, and reporting on violations of international humanitarian law, as well as abuses of human rights.⁹ The United Nations Security Council renewed the UNMISS mandate on 15 March 2023 with the same four pillars. However, 2023 is a crucial year for the country as well as UNMISS, as the three-year period outlined as part of revised Agreement will conclude with elections. The Mission has identified five priority areas: supporting efforts to achieve the benchmarks of

the R-ARCSS (revised Peace Agreement), contributing to a safe and secure environment, conducting political engagement, promoting the rule of law and access to justice, and strengthening strategic partnerships.

MANDATE REVISIONS OVER THE YEARS

UNMISS's mandate of 2021 (S/RES/2567) was designed to advance a three-year strategic vision to prevent a return to civil war in South Sudan, to build durable peace at the local and national levels, and to support inclusive and accountable governance and free, fair, and peaceful elections in accordance with the Revitalized Agreement. A review of the UN Mandates over the years gives an insight into the transformation of conflict paradigm. Key points and focus areas addressed in various UN Resolutions are given in Appendix. Key highlights are:

- Conflict related surge of military component from 7,000 to 12,500 in 2013, and 17,000 in 2016. *Strategic Review* had recommended in 2020 an authorized strength of 15,000 military personnel, indicating the fact that actual manning has always stayed under 15,000. Based on additional tasks envisaged as part of election support, the SRSG has recommended a capability study to evaluate need for additional troops.
- The police component has increased from 900 to 1,323, even though the *Strategic Review* of 2020 and other reports indicate a planned reduction or reorientation, in view of reduced/redesignated POC sites. Police officers are now expected to perform a larger role as part of capacity building (National Police Force), and assistance in election process.
- 'Protection of civilians' has continued as primary focus, while importance for other tasks like ensuring implementation of ceasefire agreement, peacebuilding, conflict related sexual violence, sexual and gender-based violence, and investigating human right violations has varied as per ground situation.
- Post Peace Agreement, focus has shifted more towards political process, community level engagements, and supporting the building of rule of law, legal, United Army (South Sudan People's Defence Forces) and police forces. Even aspects of climate change have figured in recent resolutions and discussions.
- Considering poor surface connectivity, and almost absent land routes, more emphasis is now on mobility and sustenance. All-terrain vehicles, austere self-sustenance for troops, shedding obsolete equipment of limited utility, etc., have been recommended.

- Orientation towards Security Sector Reform, Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR), electoral affairs, constitution building with the aim of increasing South Sudanese ownership of the peace-building process.
- Proposing the setting up of a hybrid court with regional assistance has been a sensitive subject as the trials might include even some people in power once past crimes are investigated¹⁰.
- Arms embargo and freezing of assets of certain personnel and entities, while also reducing unrestricted flow of weapons into the country.
- Looking for more regional engagements and expertise to find solutions aligned with the theme: peaceful South Sudan is important for a peaceful Africa.
- Importance of Strategic Communication, across other missions and within various components. Exploiting Radio Miraya as one of the means of outreach to the populace.

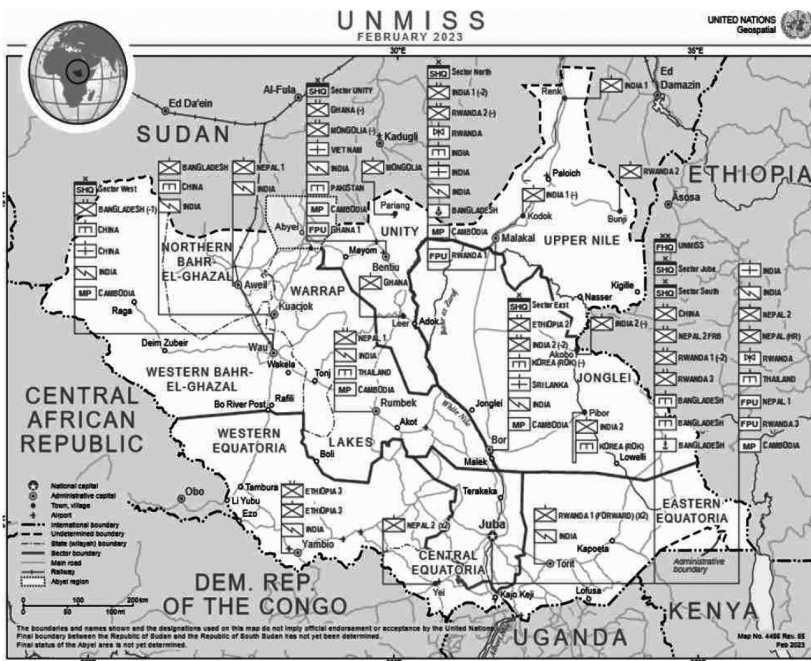


Figure 2 Deployment of troops in South Sudan

Source: 'Situation in South Sudan: Report of the Secretary-General', available at <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4004239?ln=en>, accessed on 10 April 2023

THE FOUR PILLARS OF THE UNMISS MANDATE

The focus of UNMISS now is on building durable peace, while also supporting inclusive, accountable governance and preventing a return to civil war. The operational and administrative challenges of ensuring implementation of each of the four pillars of the present mandate, will now be analysed.

Pillar 1: Protection of Civilians

Protection of civilian mandate in UN peacekeeping is defined as ‘without prejudice to the primary responsibility of the host state, integrated and coordinated activities by all civilian and uniformed mission components to prevent, deter or respond to threats of physical violence against civilians within the mission’s capabilities and areas of deployment through the use of all necessary means, up to and including deadly force’.¹¹ UNDPKO had drafted three tiers of protection activities which the missions would implement in pursuit of their mandates: (i) protection through dialogue and engagement, (ii) provision of physical protection and (iii) establishment of a protective environment.¹² UNMISS has specialised protection roles relating to sexual and gender-based violence, conflict related sexual violence and child protection.

POC sites in UNMISS are areas designated as safe zones for civilians who have been displaced by conflict or who are at risk from armed groups or other threats. Since the outbreak of conflict in South Sudan in 2013, UNMISS has established a network of POC sites across the country. These sites have provided a lifeline for tens of thousands of civilians who have been forced to flee their homes due to violence and insecurity. The mission is responsible for providing protection and assistance to civilians within these sites, which typically include shelters, food, water and medical services. However, the operation of POC sites is not without challenges. More than 1.7 million people of South Sudan are internally displaced and 2.4 million have sought safety across borders as insecurity persists across much of the country. Approximately 2,03,000 people in South Sudan are living in the confines of the five POC/ IDP sites, seeking protection from the crisis and fearing targeting due to their ethnicity.¹³

While comprising only a small fraction of the displaced community, the POC sites have presented distinct challenges for humanitarian actors, which include:

- *Limited resources:* For operating POC sites and to cover the area beyond POC sites in the hinterland with limited connectivity.

- *Security risks*: POC sites are collocated with UN bases, which pose significant security risks to UNMISS personnel in case of outbreak of hostilities.
- *Coordination with other actors*: Effective coordination with other humanitarian actors can be challenging in such a complex and dynamic environment.
- *Sustainability*: The establishment of POC sites is meant to be a temporary measure. However, in some cases, civilians have been living in these sites for years, which raises questions about the long-term sustainability of the approach.

Sustainability of POC sites and their impact on long term strategic requirement of everlasting peace has been an ongoing debate. In April 2015, the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) released a Policy on the Protection of Civilians in United Nations Peacekeeping, which for the first time stated that as a last resort in extreme situations, UN missions must be prepared to open their gates to protect civilians.¹⁴ In 2020, UNMISS redesignated some of the POC sites (including the ones in Bor, Wau, Juba, and Bentiu) as IDP camps, with the associated implication that the control of these camps would rest with the South Sudan Government. The mission continues to provide physical protection to approximately 34,000 civilians at its POC sites in Malakal, Upper Nile state. With the redesignation of its POC sites, UNMISS's approach to physical protection is now focused on enhanced mobility. This new 'hub-and-spoke' model depends on the more frequent use of temporary operating bases, patrols, comprehensive early warning systems, and engagement platoons.

A strategic review of UNMISS carried out in 2020, highlighted the importance of three-way communication while redesignating such sites, involving UNMISS, humanitarian aid workers as well as internally displaced populace.¹⁵ The UNSC resolutions of 2022 and 2023 include protection of population in such redesignated locations and makes a mention of involving all parties in decision making, while making such redesignations. Certain UN bodies have also indicated the need to provide security to civilians away from such camps, as they constitute more than 80 per cent of the populace, which the UNMISS has addressed through temporary troop deployments and extended outreach programmes.

Pillar 2: Creating Conditions Conducive for Delivery of Humanitarian Assistance

With such an extensive geographical layout with severe mobility restrictions, ensuring continuous UNMISS presence at all sensitive locations becomes a challenge. Warring groups, abject poverty, rebel factions, and even miscreants add to this operational friction. Mission flights and the protection of airstrips by the Mission for United Nations Humanitarian Air Service flights performed by the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) are crucial to the mobility of humanitarian and development actors. Moreover, where towns are considered insecure, many humanitarian and development actors continue to live in humanitarian hubs adjacent to United Nations bases and within compounds protected by United Nations peacekeepers. With assistance from UNMISS, the United Nations Mine Action Service supports the clearance of mine fields and cluster bomb strike sites. A plan is in place to clear, in conjunction with the National Mine Action Authority, all known explosive hazards within the next five years to achieve compliance with the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, adopted in 1997.

While the RTGoNU can be assisted at every step towards long term stability, the root causes of conflict like the struggle and contestation for political power, tribal animosity, proliferation of arms, perceptions of insecurity, issues of cattle-related conflict (cattle raids, counter-raids, and fights over grazing land) and the breakdown of cultural values and norms, are real and live.¹⁶ However, it is the lack of economic opportunities for the general population, the lack of economic development and poor social service delivery that have largely sustained political instability whilst creating the necessary conditions for the manipulation of local communities by factional leaders and militias to engage in conflicts.

The primary role of UNMISS is to coordinate with humanitarian actors, to ensure safe delivery of aid, while also ensuring safe access by all to such sites. There have been instances of targeted violence against the vulnerable populace, while enroute to collect aid, as well as violence to usurp extra aid material by certain armed rebel groups. Conflict related sexual violence, as part of these actions can never be ruled out. A fine balance is maintained between extended outreach of aid distribution and increased vulnerability of UN personnel themselves in extended deployment. Safety of personnel, both civil as well as aid workers can be ensured through military presence, as well by obtaining assurances from local military commanders, but the

whole concept gets challenged when the UNMISS troop movement itself is restricted, as part of Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) violations. Though many UN Resolutions have been passed on ensuring freedom of movement for UNMISS personnel, there have been many instances of SOFA violations.

Pillar 3: Supporting the Implementation of Revitalized Agreement and Peace Process

Many agreements have been signed by the warring factions with some of them being the Agreement for Cessation of Hostilities (ACOH), ARCSS and R-ARCSS (Revitalized Peace Agreement). RJMEC and CTSAMVM are the monitoring agencies under the IGAD umbrella, even as other entities like AU and AU Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) are assisting with setting up Hybrid Court and stabilising rule of law. The importance of Security Sector Reform (SSR) and Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) in addressing local and national conflict cannot be ignored.

While ensuring the prevention of any forms of conflict, UNMISS will have to provide both technical and administrative support for peaceful conduct of elections. Creating a political and civic space, having transitional security arrangements and an inclusive constitutional review process, would form part of implementing this mandate. What has also been highlighted in various studies, including the *Strategic Review* of 2020, is the importance of including whole of region in peace engagements, while also focusing on community level peace workshops to build everlasting peace. The South Sudan National Dialogue (SSND), set up in 2016, where all segments of society voice their opinion on nation building has made good progress. In a concluding report of SSND process in 2020, the forum demanded the stepping down of both Salva Kiir and Riek Machar, for the peace process to really move forward. One study also recommends moving away from the 'loser loses all' approach towards elections, for the peace process to really succeed¹⁷. Some form of power sharing, based on an accurate census and clear guidelines from a Constitution, can ensure avoidable one-sided power grabbing, and persecution of the losers, once elections are concluded. South Sudanese owning the peace process and demonstrating political will to take things forward have been identified as key elements of the strategy.

Pillar 4: Monitoring, Investigating, and Reporting on Violations of Humanitarian and Human Rights law

In 2022, UNMISS documented at least 3,469 civilians affected by violence and subjected to killing, injury, abduction, and conflict-related sexual violence

(CRSV) in South Sudan.¹⁸ This represents an increase of 2 per cent compared with 2021 when 3,414 victims were recorded. Majority of the violence was geographically concentrated in 208 payams (39 per cent of the 540 payams in the country), accounting for more than 92 per cent of the victims. The number of killings decreased by 16 per cent as compared with 2021, while the number of recorded cases of injuries increased by 17 per cent and the number of abductions increased by 6 per cent. However, the number of CRSV cases increased significantly by 96 per cent, remaining an issue of great concern. Despite a 27 per cent overall decrease of violence in 2022 (from 982 to 714), civilians continue to be at risk of violence. Sub-national violence involving parties to conflict accounted for 38 per cent of the documented incidents and accounted for 48 per cent of victims, while community-based militias and/or civil-defence groups accounted for 54 per cent of the incidents involving 47 per cent of the victims.

The task becomes even more challenging, when free movement of UN personnel to various locations is itself restricted. As per the Status of Forces Agreement, agreed upon with Government of South Sudan (GoSS), free movement of UNMISS personnel and equipment for smooth execution of their tasks must be permitted. Traditionally, that has remained a grey area. A system of informing the GoSS about UNMISS movement of personnel, vehicles, and aircraft prior to such activities, was taken as a mandatory permission by GoSS, over a period, thereby restricting free access and operation. Certain UNMISS initiatives like supporting the mobile courts and provision of technical advice and training by Rule of Law Advisory Section has been found to be effective. Similarly, Rapid Investigation Team set up by the UNMISS Human Rights Division and increased integrated mobile patrols by UNMISS Force with longer sustenance and presence, has considerably improved the security paradigm.

Summary of Operational and Administrative Challenges in Mandate Implementation

Despite UNMISS's efforts, there are still significant operational and administrative challenges to enforcing the mandate. These challenges include:

- *Political instability*: The country's political instability makes it difficult to implement effective protection measures. The RTGoNU formation in 2020, has seen considerable reduction in random cases of violence.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Armed groups</i>: Various armed groups continue to operate in South Sudan, and they often target civilians, including women and children. The problem gets exacerbated when government forces are blamed for violence in some sectors. The Status of Force Agreement (SOFA) with the South Sudanese government restricts free movement of UN troops and thereby impacts on timely response in remote areas.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Limited resources and accessibility</i>: UNMISS operates with limited resources and faces challenges in accessing remote areas where civilians are most vulnerable. Limitations include limited funding, personnel, and equipment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Logistical challenges</i>: South Sudan's poor infrastructure and ongoing conflict makes it difficult to access remote areas, which can impact UNMISS's ability to provide protection and deliver humanitarian aid to those in need.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Limited capacity of local institutions</i>: South Sudan's institutions, including the police and judicial system, are often weak and lack capacity, which makes it challenging for UNMISS to work effectively with them to promote stability and security.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Personal security</i>: Though under a Chapter VII Mandate, UNMISS personnel face significant security risks in South Sudan, where armed groups and criminal elements also operate. This requires UNMISS to maintain high levels of security for its personnel and operations, which can be a drain on resources.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Gender-based violence</i>: Women and girls continue to face sexual and gender-based violence, and cultural norms that reinforce gender inequality make it challenging to address this issue. The UNMISS report of 2023 outlined Conflict Related Sexual Violence (CRSV) increasing by 96 per cent (194 to 380) with women forming a major component of those affected. Gender mainstreaming, female engagement teams, and increased gender parity in uniformed components of UNMISS could considerably improve UNMISS effectiveness.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Lack of accountability</i>: There is a lack of accountability for perpetrators of violence against civilians, which perpetuates a culture of impunity. Delayed setting up of hybrid courts is an indication of the reluctance of people in power to be tried for crimes of the past.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Bureaucratic hurdles</i>: UNMISS must navigate complex bureaucratic processes, both within the UN system and with the South Sudanese government. This can create delays and complications in implementing its mandate. Resistance from GoSS for induction of new equipment, delayed permissions for flying in military personnel, as part of yearly/six monthly turnover, etc. are some examples.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Language barriers:</i> South Sudan has over 60 different languages spoken, which can make it challenging for UNMISS personnel to communicate effectively with the local population. Limited availability of Community Liaison Assistants (CLA) makes field interactions challenging. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Limited infrastructure:</i> South Sudan lacks many of the basic infrastructure required to support UNMISS operations, such as reliable electricity, transportation, and telecommunications. |

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INDIAN ENGAGEMENT

In the backdrop of Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC) Kampala principles and PM Modi's ten mantras for Africa, there are lot of avenues for India to engage with South Sudan constructively.¹⁹ In view of the newly ratified UN Mandate, which include climate change monitoring, constitution building and support for elections, and considering India's experience in all these fields, a comprehensive road map can be developed incorporating all the sectors. In a recent visit by a South Sudanese delegation, President Droupadi Murmu assured that India will provide full support to South Sudan in the ongoing political process. She said that South Sudan can benefit from India's experiences in parliamentary democracy in its ongoing political process, including the drafting of a new Constitution.²⁰ Community level engagements, considering that three fifths of the population is Christian, our own agencies engaged in similar work can be employed.

Aspects like data for development and Indian medical initiatives like e-a-rogyabharat can be replicated under the aegis of the Indian embassy at Juba. Inclusion of climate change monitoring in UNMISS's mandate recognises the interdependence of peace, security, and sustainable development. It underscores the need to address the root causes of conflict, which often have underlying environmental, social, and economic factors. However, there may also be challenges to implementing climate change monitoring within UNMISS's existing framework. For example, there may be limited resources available to carry out this new mandate, and it may require additional expertise or partnerships with other organisations to fully implement. India can offer its own experts, either as part of uniformed force or as experts on mission with United Nations.

With ongoing initiatives for a unified South Sudanese Army, military-to-military engagements including capability enhancement can be planned. Indian experience in nation building, peacebuilding and counterinsurgency

can be succinctly used to mould the new Armed Forces which initially will be an amalgamation of soldiers and mercenaries, and even those who would have been child soldiers. Respect for humanitarian values and human rights can thereon be ingrained in each soldier at various levels of training. Posting of a Military Attache at the Indian Embassy and having Joint Exercises or Planning Camps can be part of the initial steps. Expertise of our own naval personnel can be explored to manage the inland waterways, especially on the Nile, which connects the North to the South. Expertise of Indian armed and police forces in conduct of elections can be useful as South Sudan prepares itself for the same in August–December 2024. The expectations of United Nations to strengthen protection of civilians, beyond the POC sites will create considerable load on the limited number of peacekeepers in UNMISS. A collaborative plan incorporating all law enforcement agencies, including the integrated Armed Forces, will ensure reduced incidents of violence.

Preparing for the Future

There are no quick-fix solutions to ensure peace in a country that has been ravaged by violence for the last few decades, even before it became a country. Poverty, corruption, malnutrition, and poorly managed resources are further jeopardizing the emancipation of this new nation. A collective effort, founded in the Kampala principles and other concepts like primacy for Africa, will ensure that peace, which has been elusive and transcendental for a large part of history will finally return to this young nation.

As seen in the UNMISS mandate, the focus is on building enduring peace, with increased South Sudanese ownership, while also strengthening other aspects like Rule of Law, inclusive Constitution, combined Armed and Police forces, and improving women's participation in peace process. With dismal records in ease of doing business and corruption, and with no major industry/ business other than oil and natural resources, engaging the youth and eradicating unemployment in an environment of food and life insecurity becomes a major challenge for any agency. Increased regional engagements and employment of experts in specific domains from countries with exceptional peacekeeping and peacebuilding standards like India, could see this young nation prospering once again. An integrated effort from traditional friends of South Sudan like the Troika, AU, EU and other agencies, in the domains of SSR and DDR, legal structures, funding for capacity building, election process, etc., combined with effective peacekeeping by UNMISS and implementation of the four key pillars of the mandate is necessary. These

steps will facilitate optimal humanitarian assistance and prepare South Sudan for existential contingencies like drought, floods and inflation.

APPENDIX

UN Security Council Resolution Number	Troop Strength	Mandate/ Key Points
S/RES/1996 (2011) Establishment of Mission	7,000 Mil, 900 civilian police, appropriate civilian component	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for peace consolidation • Support Government for conflict prevention and protection of civilians • Support Government for providing security, establish rule of law, justice
S/RES/2046 (2012) Focus on resolution of issues between Sudan and South Sudan, including coordination with UNISFA	Same as above	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe demilitarized border zone (SDBZ) and Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM) • Resolve final status of Abyei area and all other bilateral issues with African Union and IGAD assistance • Commended United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA)
S/RES/2057 (2012)	Same as above	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection of civilians • Improved security environment • Develop protection of civilian strategy and Early warning, Early response strategy • Support governmental peacebuilding efforts
S/RES/2109 (2013) Post December 2012 downing of a United Nations helicopter by the SPLA and the April 2013 attack on a ground convoy	Same as above	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection of civilians • Achievement of improved security environment • Implement protection of civilian and Early Warning strategies

<p>S/RES/2132 (2013) Post December 2013 attack on UN camp at Akobo (2x Indian peacekeepers died in action, many civilians killed)</p>	<p>Increase of force levels to 12,500 Military troops 1,323 Formed Police Unit personnel</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer of troops from other missions on priority
<p>S/RES/2155 (2014)</p>	<p>Same force levels, but three battalions within 12500 to support IGAD's ceasefire monitoring team (MVM) 1,323 Formed Police Unit personnel</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection of civilians • Monitoring and investigating human rights • Creating conditions conducive for delivery of humanitarian assistance • Supporting the implementation of Cessation of Hostilities Agreement • Strict impartiality with both parties
<p>S/RES/2206 (2015)</p>	<p>Same as above</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sanctions • Travel ban • Freezing of assets
<p>S/RES/2223 (2015)</p>	<p>12,500 military troops 1,323 Formed Police Units</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection of civilians • Monitoring and investigating human rights • Creating conditions conducive to delivery of humanitarian assistance • Supporting implementation of Cessation of Hostilities Agreement
<p>S/RES/2304 (2016) In the wake of clashes in POC sites of Malakal and Juba (Feb and July 2016)</p>	<p>17,000 military including 4,000 Regional Protection Force (RPF) 1,323 Formed Police Unit personnel</p>	

S/RES/2406 (2018)	17,000 military including 4,000 RPF 2,101 Police including 78 correction officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection of civilians • Monitoring and investigating human rights • Creating conditions conducive to delivery of humanitarian assistance • Supporting implementation of Agreement and peace process (assist Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism [CTSAMM]—later expanded to include Verification, so CTSAMVM)
S/RES/2428 (2018)	Same as above	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arms embargo • Inspections • Targeted sanctions
S/RES/2567 (2021)	17,000 military 2,101 Police including 88 correction officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection of civilians (beyond Protection of Civilian sites also) • Creating conditions conducive for the delivery of humanitarian assistance • Supporting the implementation of a revitalized peace agreement and peace process • Monitoring, investigating, and reporting on human rights and legal violations
S/RES/2625 (2022)	Same as above	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as above. More stress on unified forces, constitution building, hybrid court, etc.
S/RES/2677 (2023)	Same as above	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as above

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