

Interests of IGAD Member States in the South Sudan Peace Process, 2013- 2023

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ABSTRACT

Three civil wars have been witnessed in South Sudan. The first Sudanese Civil war began in 1955 pitting troops from the Central government of Sudan and the Southern Sudan Liberation Movement (SSLM) rebels. This war ended after the Addis Ababa Agreement of 1972. The second war began in 1983 and ended in 2005 with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement between. A referendum in 2011 overwhelmingly voted for the independent state of South Sudan. Two years (2013) after the birth of the South Sudan nation a third civil war erupted. The civil war pitted former Vice-President Dr Riek Machar against the government of President Salva Kirr of South Sudan. The humanitarian crisis and abuse of human rights associated with the civil conflict prompted the international community through regional powers to intervene and restore stability in South Sudan. The war in South Sudan has persisted despite the efforts by IGAD and other players in the peace process. This study examines the interests of IGAD member states in the South Sudan peace process between 2013 and 2023. Anchored on the realism theory of international relations this study argued that interests of IGAD member states has tended to slow down the peace process in South Sudan between 2013 and 2023. This study takes the form of an explanatory research design. Purposive and snow balling sampling techniques were used to identify 410 respondents for field interviews. The study purposively identified 385 South Sudanese refugees in Nairobi. A total of 25 other respondents who included; representatives of the warring factions in South Sudan residing in Kenya, IGAD officials, EAC officials and Diplomats from IGAD member states were also interviewed. This study noted that in as much as different players have significantly contributed to the peace process; interveners' interests have tended to slow down the peace process in South Sudan.

Key word: peace Process, Humanitarian intervention, Geo-Political Interests

INTRODUCTION

Sudan's formal colonial occupation began in 1898, when the British Royal Forces successfully subjected the country to combined Anglo-Egyptian authority. During the colonial colonization of Sudan, the British purposely administered a 'segregated' Sudan, with the northern portion being Muslim and Arabic-speaking, and the southern area being partially Christian and conservative in faith and multilingual in language. This colonial tactic of divide and rule persisted in colonial Sudan until January 1956, when the country gained independence.

Sudan and South Sudan have undergone three civil wars. The first Sudanese Civil War began in 1955, opposing forces from Sudan's Central Government against rebels from the Southern Sudan Liberation Movement (SSLM). This conflict led to Addis Abeba Agreement of 1972. The second civil war was fought between 1983 and 2005. The war ended with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the central government in Khartoum and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). President

Omar Al Bashir and rebel leader John Garang represented the Khartoum and SPLA in signing the CPA in Nairobi respectively. Subsequently, South Sudan gained independence after a landslide vote in a 2011 referendum.

The third civil conflict broke out two years (2013) after South Sudan was founded. In less than three years, the nascent nation was thrown into civil war. The civil conflict in South Sudan resulted in a violent battle between ethnic groups, causing a significant humanitarian disaster. Thousands died during the battle, and millions of refugees were relocated from various regions of the nation. During the civil war, there were reports of atrocities against humans, such as murder and rape. The conflict also caused political unrest, the breakdown of the country's infrastructure, hunger, and food insecurity.

The rising humanitarian catastrophe caused by the civil conflict necessitated the intervention of the international community in peace procedures aimed at restoring civility and stability to South Sudan. IGAD was the main platform of peace negotiations in South Sudan. IGAD member states have openly pursued states interests in the peace process in the South Sudan peace process. This has had negative implications on the peace process. It is against this background that this study examines the interests of IGAD member states in the South Sudan peace process between 2013 and 2023.

Statement of the Problem

For over two decades, the regional and international community has focused on ensuring peace and stability in South Sudan. Regardless of these attempts, conflict and political violence have persisted, evolved, or reoccurred. International players, using foreign resources or initiating peacekeeping, have failed to stabilize South Sudan. State and non-state actors have played have made attempts at the restoration of peace in South Sudan.

Despite such efforts the conflict in South Sudan persist raising questions as to the realization of lasting peace and stability. The peace process has been slow with cases of re-emergence of conflict between the warring factions. When the civil conflict in South Sudan broke out, neighboring states intervened in South Sudan's internal affairs in order to achieve their own national goals. The interests of both state non-state actors seem to impact on the peace-process raising doubts on the possibility of sustainable peace and stability in the young nation. This study examines the interests of IGAD member states in the South Sudan peace process between 2013 and 2023.

Review of Related Literature

Robert Collins (2008) provides a detailed description of how the British colonialism led to the emergence of religious and cultural differences. The British colonial administrative system of governing the north and the south was designed to rule through divide and rule. In such a system, Islamic and Arabic Arab cultures were promoted in the north while Christianity and traditional African religion reigned in the south (Deng, 2001).

The independent Constitution in Sudan raised two questions; whether to have a federal or unitary state, and whether to have a secular or Islamic constitution. Two opposing forces formed from the two questions. Southerners advocated for a federal state to avoid domination by the north (Malwal, 1981). The north on the other hand opposed federalism on grounds that it will split the south from the north. The North-South divide subsequently came to dominate Sudanese politics. Southerners regarded the refusal to enact a federal constitution as North colonization of the South. When Sudan gained independence, the Northern authorities, who were largely Arab and Muslim, were given political power at the cost of the Southerners.

In 1955, the year prior to the country obtaining independence, a conflict erupted between the central

government and the south based rebel group SSLM. Poggo (2009), documents of the first civil war in Sudan. The author notes that as the country neared independence, tensions rose as the British granted the Northern-Arab-dominated government political power at the expense of the Southerners. This prompted the formation of the Land Freedom Army (Anyanya Movement).

The Addis Ababa Peace Accord (AAPA) of 1972 marked the end of the first civil conflict. Although the AAPA ended the first civil war, it was unable to bring the North and South to a satisfactory agreement as to whether to accept federalism or build a secular or Islamic state. When Gaafar Nimeriy, Sudan's fifth president at the time and members of Sudanese Socialist Union party, introduced Sharia law in the South in 1983, a decade of mostly peaceful living came to an abrupt end (Collins, 2008). Southerners, who were mostly Christians and traditionalists, viewed this conduct as a provocation. The second civil war erupted when the Addis Abeba Peace Accord of 1972 failed.

Examining the failure of the Addis Ababa Peace Accord of 1972 to avert another civil war in 1983 would be useful in this study of South Sudan's peace process. Questions will be made about why the protagonists in Africa frequently breach peace deals and ceasefires. This study focuses on oil discoveries in the dispute in South Sudan war. Although the discovery of oil was a godsend, it quickly became a burden due to battles for control of the resource.

Between the years 1983 to 2005, SPLA and Sudan's central government in Khartoum fought a second civil war. The Second Civil War came to an end with the signing of the CPA of 2005 in Naivasha Kenya. Subsequently, South Sudan gained independence through a nationwide referendum in 2011. After two years of independence, another civil conflict erupted.

The December 2013 civil upheaval in South Sudan resulted in a significant humanitarian catastrophe, widespread displacement, and crimes against civilians, primarily women and children. The turmoil in South Sudan increased pressure on neighboring nations, pushing the international community to act. At various stages, a variety of parties, including IGAD, the AU, the EU, and the UN, have helped to restore peace and stability in South Sudan.

Deng (2018) examines the role played by IGAD in the peace process in South Sudan both as an international organization and as an association of individual member nations.

According to Deng, IGAD remains the primary platform in the peace process in South Sudan. IGAD was also very instrumental in the signing of the CPA in 2005 that ended the second civil war. Other international organizations that played a big role in the signing of the CPA included the Troika nations (the United States, Norway, and the United Kingdom), as well as China and Russia.

Although IGAD's eventual success in negotiating a solution between the parties, the mediation procedure has proven tough throughout the war. These hurdles include the warring parties' zero-sum attitude, which keeps them committed to military solutions and unable to negotiate an agreement, as well as regional leaders' emphasis on bilateral interests. The interests of both state non-state actors seem to impact on the peace-process raising doubts on the possibility of sustainable peace and stability in the young nation.

Theoretical Framework

This research is anchored on realism theory of international relation.. Realism as a theory argued that that the international scene is chaotic and anarchic and humanitarian interventions if any seek to promote interveners interest. States interact with one another within the international system guided with the promotion and protection of their own interests (Hans Morgenthau, 1978). It is argued here that in as match as IGAD has contributed immensely in peace process in South Sudan the interests among member states has

slowed down the peace process. IGAD member states and actors in the international system depend on whatever arrangements they can produce to strengthen security (power) and survival.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study takes the form of an explanatory research design. In this case the interests of IGAD member states in the South Sudan peace process were explained. This study was conducted in Nairobi Kenya that hosts hundreds of thousands of South Sudan nationals. The target population comprised; South Sudanese refugees in Kenya, representatives of the warring factions in South Sudan residing in Kenya, IGAD officials, EAC officials and Diplomats from IGAD member states. Purposive and snow balling sampling techniques were used to select 410 respondents distributed as follows;

	Category of Respondent	Number
1	SPLM (Government faction)	5
2	SPLM IO (Rebel faction)	5
3	IGAD Secretariat	5
4	EAC Officials	5
5	Diplomats from IGAD member Countries	5
6	South Sudanese Refugees in Nairobi	385
	Total	410

The main research instruments for this study comprised questionnaires and interviews schedules with both closed and open ended questions. Interview guides comprised of open ended questions to give the respondents room to respond to questions without much restriction. Questionnaires were semi-structured and composed of closed ended question. Data collected in this study was analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively.

The Interests of IGAD Member States in the South Sudan Peace Process

This study notes that geopolitical interests play a significant role in the calculations of warring parties as they seek increased diplomatic and military backing from their neighbors. In this situation, geopolitical interests among actors might have a detrimental influence on a peace process by delaying it. This study investigates the interests of IGAD member states in the South Sudan peace process. The effects of rising interests among various stakeholders in the peace process are assessed. The interests of different states in the peace process in South Sudan are examined.

To begin with the interests of Uganda in the peace process are examined. It is noted that Uganda and South Sudan are key commercial partners in commodities and services. Uganda sees South Sudan as a significant partner in the exchange of products and services. Consumer items made in Uganda have benefited from the South Sudan wholesale and retail market (Obala, 2012). The onset of the civil war had a direct impact on Ugandan-made items entering the South Sudan market.

This study finds that Uganda and Sudan's rivalry and profound distrust had a significant influence on the civil war and peace process in South Sudan. Uganda has long-standing political, economic, and security interests in South Sudan. Following the political instability in South Sudan, Uganda engaged militarily to defend what it saw as a poorly organized state struggling for survival against rebels seeking to seize power unlawfully. Historically, Uganda provided considerable political and military assistance to the SPLM/A throughout the second civil war against Sudan ((Irin, 2014). In reaction, Sudan's Khartoum-based government backed the LRA, a rebel organization operating in northern Uganda.

This study notes that Uganda has not been playing active role in the IGAD led peace mediation process in South Sudan due to its perceived partisan approach to the crisis. Uganda under President Museveni has reaped significant benefits from South Sudan's separation and political independence, particularly in the export markets. Following the 2013 crisis, Uganda intervened militarily to support President Kiir in his struggle against Riek Machar's troops (Malou, 2014). Uganda defended the deployment of its military by arguing that the South Sudanese government had requested assistance to battle rebels who were preparing to overthrow the Juba administration (Deng (2018)). This paper questions the implications of Uganda's open demonstration of impartiality in the South Sudan peace process.

Second this study examines Sudan's geopolitical interests in South Sudan as part of the IGAD-led peace process. Sudan's interests are analyzed in terms of diplomatic and political ties with Uganda. It is noted here that Sudan's geopolitical goals are centered on maintaining a strong position of power in the Horn of Africa. Sudan's strong position in the area is under threat from Uganda's increasing supremacy. As noted by Collier and Bannon (2015), Sudan's only opportunity to restore its lost greatness is to fight Uganda's influence over the fledgling state of South Sudan. Sudan and Uganda have had a long history of strained relations dating back to the southerners' independence struggle, which lasted from 1983 to 2005. The government of Sudan became worried that of the possibility of the rebel group the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF) getting the support of Uganda to overthrow the Omar al-Bashir regime.

According to the findings of this study, Khartoum is interested in the South Sudan peace process to repair its strained ties with the United States, South Sudan's key ally. The US and EU, in particular, had accused the government of violating human rights in Darfur and other parts of the nation. Sudan's engagement in the peace process appears to be motivated by a desire to satisfy these nations (CDI, 2013). The civil war in South Sudan provided a chance for Sudan to sell itself to the world community as a country that cherishes peace and stability.

Notwithstanding repeated assertions that Sudan was helping rebel troops against the South Sudanese government, it seems unlikely that Sudan had changed its practice of settling past scores with the administration (Sudan Tribune, 16 August 2014). The most advantageous situation for Sudan would be a lengthy civil war in South Sudan. Such a civil war would prevent South Sudan from becoming as a dominating oil-rich state in the Horn of Africa, rivaling Sudan. Sudan feared the rise of a powerful South Sudan aligned with Uganda. A frail and weak South Sudan would create conditions conducive to Sudan reestablishing its historic influence over South Sudanese politics through increasing polarization. Despite apparent divisions and interests between Sudan and South Sudan, the two nations maintain amicable ties.

Third, this study examines the interests of Ethiopia in the South Sudan Peace Process. It is noted that Ethiopia has long dominated political and economic events in the Horn of Africa. Ethiopia is strategically placed in the Horn of Africa, and it is the only country that shares borders with Sudan and South Sudan. Ethiopia has suffered the most from wars between and within Sudan (Maru and Abate, 2013). During the liberation struggle, Ethiopia cooperated with the southern Sudan. The SPLM was really founded in Ethiopia in 1983. Ethiopia sought to maintain a neutral posture in the South Sudan civil conflict owing to larger geopolitical and security concerns (Belachew, 2013; Omar Mahmood, 2018).

According to this study, Ethiopia may have avoided involvement in the South Sudan civil conflict as a result of its controversial unilateral military intervention in the Somali civil war in July 2006. Unlike in Somalia, Ethiopia opposed a unilateral and partisan military intervention in the South Sudan civil war, believing it would be counterproductive. Ethiopia was fiercely opposed to Uganda's unilateral military intervention in the civil strife. Ethiopia requested that Ugandan troops withdraw from South Sudan, even though they had been welcomed by the South Sudanese administration. According to Kigambo (2014), Ethiopia saw that Uganda's unilateral military engagement might jeopardize the peace process overseen by IGAD, of which

Uganda is a part.

It is noted here that, while Ethiopia attempted to maintain a nonpartisan posture in the South Sudan civil war, its strategic thinking about the issue was influenced by serious security concerns. To begin with, the civil conflict caused a significant influx of refugees into Ethiopia. When the peace process began in January 2014, Ethiopia was trying to absorb almost a quarter million South Sudanese refugees, the vast majority of whom were Nuer women and children. Second, Ethiopia anticipated that the situation might devolve into a complex ethnic war that would be impossible to manage given the severe political disagreements between the Nuer and Anuak ethnic populations in Ethiopia's Gambella area.

Thirdly, the deteriorating security situation along Ethiopia's politically volatile and porous border with Sudan and South Sudan has created a direct security danger to the country. To ensure its security, Ethiopia tried to avoid the fall of the South Sudanese government, which may lead to an intensification of the conflict. Ethiopia was concerned that a prolonged civil conflict would allow Eritrea to utilize South Sudan's peripheral areas to infiltrate rebel Ethiopian rebel forces and destabilize the nation. Ethiopia was concerned that a comparable civil war in Sudan will escalate into a full-fledged war between Sudan and South Sudan, complicating the region's already fragile condition.

Fourth the interests of Eritrea in the peace process are examined. It is noted Eritrea, on the other hand, sought to undermine Ethiopia's advances in the South Sudan peace process. Ethiopia and Eritrea's longstanding conflicts have kept the latter isolated from Horn of Africa politics and dynamics. Eritrea is clearly dissatisfied with the IGAD-led peace process, which appears to be directed by Ethiopia. Seyoum Mesfin of Ethiopia serves as the lead mediator in the IGAD-led process. Eritrea sees IGAD as Ethiopia's political weapon to maintain its military and economic domination in the Horn of Africa. Eritrea is accused of secretly aiding the SPLM-IO to counter Ethiopia's apparent support for the existing administration in South Sudan.

Fifth, this study examines the interests of Kenya in the South Sudan peace process. It is noted here that Kenya has had a longstanding interest in and involvement in South Sudan. Kenya has seconded one of the three IGAD mediators; General retired Lazaro Sumbeiywo, who was also heavily involved in the Sudan-South Sudan peace process that resulted in the signing of the CPA in 2005 (IGAD, 2005; ACAPS, 2015). Kenya has maintained good relations with both the South Sudanese government and opposition. Kenya has avoided alienating any of the two opposing sides in South Sudan's civil war.

Kenya it is noted expressed special anxiety about the repercussions of South Sudan's separation. There are fears that the longer the situation continues, the more difficult it would be for Kenya to remain impartial in the civil strife. The civil war in South Sudan has jeopardized the security situation along the border with Kenya. The country is dealing with an inflow of refugees escaping the civil war in South Sudan. While Kenya was actively participating in a military operation in Somalia during the second civil between 1983 and 2005, the government was keen to protect its business and financial interests in South Sudan, which had been jeopardized by the turmoil.

Kenya made significant investments in banking, construction, aviation, insurance, hospitality, transportation, and information and technology following South Sudan's independence. Kenyan institutions, such as Kenya Commercial Bank and Equity Bank, have dominated South Sudan's financial sector. Other areas where Kenyan businesspeople dominate in South Sudan are wholesale and retail commerce. As of 2012, overall, Kenya-South Sudan exports amounted for 10.2% of total COMESA exports. Kenya's exports to South Sudan were the fourth highest in the COMESA region (KBS, Economic Survey 2013).

Finally this study examines the interests of Egypt in the South Sudan Peace process. It is noted here that in an attempt to restore its place as a major player in the Horn of Africa, Egypt entered into a military

cooperation agreement with South Sudan in March 2014. The agreement focused on collaboration in terms of exchanging experience and training military personnel. Egypt and South Sudan agreed to undertake cooperative military drills and seminars (Sudan Tribune, March 23, 2014). This military cooperation pact allowed South Sudan to withstand diplomatic and political pressure from both Ethiopia and Sudan. At the same time, Egypt exploited this military agreement to formally create a security partnership with South Sudan, which impacted future ties between the two nations.

Additionally, Egypt strove to preserve balanced ties with Sudan and South Sudan, both of which share the Nile River, on which the Egyptians rely greatly for existence. As observed by Angelo and McGuinness (2012), Egyptian interests in the South Sudan issue stem from the fact that it directly affects Sudan, with which they share a border. Egypt also aimed to limit Ethiopia's geopolitical rankings while increasing its fortunes in the Horn of Africa by enlisting Eritrea, Sudan, and, if feasible, South Sudan as beneficial allies.

Frosty ties between Egypt and Ethiopia reached a fever pitch with the latter's intention to build the Renaissance Dam, which the former saw as an attempt to jeopardize the existence of its people, who rely significantly on the Nile River. Sudan's backing for Ethiopia's Renaissance Dam building complicates matters for Egypt, which has long relied on Sudan as an ally in its effort to control political, economic, and security concerns in the Horn of Africa. Ethiopia, on the other hand, saw military cooperation between South Sudan and Egypt as a threat to its position in the Horn of Africa, particularly since it was embroiled in a diplomatic spat with Egypt over the construction of the Grand Renaissance Dam, which is geographically close to both Sudan and South Sudan.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study finds that while regional powers did not plan for the security vacuum in South Sudan, their actions in the country's peace process have created worries. After the civil war started, regional powers fiercely sought their specific geopolitical objectives. In the course of competing for influence, South Sudan's regional powers, the majority of which are IGAD members, have crossed paths. These measures by regional powers have altered the nature of the situation. Regional nations have publicly entered the issue, such as Uganda, which dispatched ground soldiers to support the South Sudanese government against the opposition. Other nations have formed hidden and opportunistic partnerships with warring groups.

As a result, regional parties' calculations and maneuvers have characterized South Sudan's civil conflict. Membership in IGAD has always served to legitimize regional states' actions. IGAD, on the other hand, has failed to contain and balance its members' competing interests throughout the South Sudan crisis. Despite considerable international financial and political support, the IGAD-led peace mediation effort in South Sudan has been impeded by opposing geopolitical interests among member nations.

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