

CLEIMUN20

Diplomacy in a Challenging Global Environment

A Research Report

COMMITTEE: Security Council

QUESTION OF: The Question of the Instability and Humanitarian Crisis in South Sudan

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Introduction & Background

After Belgium ceded control of the area that would become the nation of Sudan in 1896, a century of post-colonial struggle was incited. In the 1940s, Britain began preparing the northern region of the country for self-governance in response to pleas for autonomy, yet ultimately unified the north and the south under one government (in the north) in the Juba Conference of 1947. Dissonance between the two subsections of Sudan was immediately obvious- firstly, the north was officially Arabic, yet southerners had been educated in English for the past half century. Furthermore, although the British had established a political infrastructure in the north, the south was largely unorganized, resulting in a lack of representation in the governance of Sudan.

In 1954, following the 1953 agreement between Britain and Egypt regarding Sudanese independence, the transition towards autonomy culminated with the formation of the first parliament. However, the reluctance of the northern government, led by Ismail al-Azhari, to institute a federal system sparked a mutiny within the southern army that led to a 17-year long

conflict (regarded as Sudan's first civil war). Over the course of the conflict, Sudan's leadership was interrupted by several coup d'états, all caused by frustration over each successive government's failure to adopt a comprehensive constitution. During this period, a movement sponsored by enraged southerners called for the secession of South Sudan entirely, and gained significant ground as the northern government floundered.

In 1973, the Addis Ababa agreement was adopted, which finally outlined a constitution for Sudan, as well as addressing key concerns of the southern secession movement (most notably a degree of autonomy in the form of a local government). Although the agreement resulted in peace between the Sudanese factions, the amnesty would be short-lived.

Under the leadership of Gaafar Nimeiry, a stalwart Muslim, Sudan shifted towards Islamification in the early 1980s, resulting in the institution of Sharia law in 1983. This, combined with a raise in the prices of basic commodities in 1985, reignited the discordance within Sudan, and engendered a series of demonstrations and strikes that shook the economy. A coup ousted Nimeiry, yet instability was perpetuated by the ineffectiveness of his successors. A military junta (established in 1989 and led by Omar al-Bashir) served only to exacerbate the conflict. Millions of Sudanese citizens were displaced as a direct result of this second civil war, yet the violence was not over.

In the early 2000s, the southern secessionists returned with renewed passion in the form of the Sudan Liberation Movement. The rebels focused on the Darfur region of Sudan, in which the civil war came to be concentrated. By 2010, 300,000 people had been killed by the insurgency and counter-insurgency, and 3,000,000 had been forced into displacement- the Darfur conflict is widely regarded as one of the largest humanitarian disasters in modern history. After African

Union peacekeeping forces failed to prevent Sudanese atrocities, the government of Chad declared war in response.

In January 2005, a peace treaty was finally reached in Nairobi Kenya. The treaty, among other goals, granted South Sudan autonomy for six years, after which a referendum would determine the future of the nation. In the late '00s, UN peacekeeping forces sought to end the conflict between Chad and Sudan as well as the Darfur conflict. In 2011, the citizens of South Sudan overwhelmingly voted to secede from the north, as outlined in the treaty, and although the borders were disputed somewhat, independence was finally reached.

Once South Sudan finally became an autonomous nation, following a century of pain and struggle, victory should have been celebrated. However, political distress in the past decade has torn the country apart and left millions in desperate need of foreign aid. In 2013, President Salva Kiir accused his Vice President, Riek Machar, of plotting a coup against him. Although the veracity of these claims is disputed, violence between two factions has spread throughout the nation, escalating into a full-scale civil war. Despite the presence of numerous peace treaties throughout the decade, most recently in September 2018, the instability in the region remains.

What Issues has the South Sudanese Civil War Caused?

Because of the devastating century of conflict and turmoil within the entire region of Sudan, its modern citizens have been left to clean up the pieces that their home has been torn into. Since the conflict began, 1 in every 3 Sudanese citizens have been forcibly displaced; 4 million have been forced to abandon their home country. Arguably more tragic are the 1.8 million people trapped inside the nation, fighting for their lives in the midst of warfare. As the carnage of civil war tears

families apart, famine exacerbates the misery, causing widespread hunger and starvation within the area. The Sudanese issue will not be solved by a quick humanitarian fix, however- the fact that only 70% of the millions of malnourished children within Sudan ensures that true prosperity is a long distance away for the world's youngest nation.

What is a “Displaced Person” and What Problems Come With that Term?

According to the United Nations Educational, Social, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the displacement of people refers to their forced movement from country or area of settlement, most often caused by armed conflict, famine, or natural disaster. These people, made to abandon their prior lives, often descend into poverty as their livelihoods are left behind them. Displaced people that move across international borders are known as refugees. However, internally displaced persons (IDPs) have become more and more prevalent in the modern era- because they stay within their country of origin, they are not protected by specific UN bodies designated to deal with refugees. Many of the people affected by the conflict in South Sudan fall under the category of IDPs, and such require a delicate procedure of aid. Location is a particularly difficult facet of the issue- during times of armed conflict, censuses are of low priority, and so records of the movements of people within their own nation are poorly kept. IDPs are just one aspect of the humanitarian issue in South Sudan which complicates matters for the Security Council.

Past Efforts to Solve This Problem

As discussed previously, the civil war itself within the two factions of Sudan has largely been resolved through the Nairobi treaty and the resulting referendum. However, more complex issues

have arisen since that time. The most notable effort to reach a conclusion to the subsequent South Sudanese civil war was the peace agreement, mediated by Ethiopian officials and signed in September 2018, in which Riek Machar, the rebel leader, was reinstated as Vice President. Across the world, the agreement was met with optimism, despite caution over the sustainability of the truce. Although the civil war was effectively wrapped up with this treaty, the humanitarian remnants were left to be cleaned up. Through resolutions adopted from late 2018 to early 2019, the General Assembly has taken substantive approaches towards sending UN humanitarian workers into the area with the additional use of NGOs, as well as paying specific attention to the safety of these workers in areas of danger.

Possible Solutions

Despite the attention paid to the Sudanese dilemma by the United Nations in recent years due to the public outcry across the globe, the humanitarian devastation persists. Devoted UN workers as well as private organizations have been providing aid for the past year or two, yet one clear obstacle stands in their way- when millions of citizens have been displaced across the region, how does the UN find those who need aid and rehabilitate them to society? This must be a focus for the foreseeable future; locating refugees and reintegrating them into daily life, as well as ensuring the precarious political situation remains stable. Furthermore, the UN must pay specific attention to the challenges faced by women and children- any response must be comprehensive and applicable to either gender. Most vital is preserving the future of South Sudan, and so re-establishing the education system must be a priority. Plenty has been attempted to cease the

conflict that has plagued the region for decades, yet a long term solution must be reached by the Security Council to preserve the safety and prosperity of the generations to come.

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