

Assessment of the effectiveness of peace treaties in conflict resolution in South Sudan: A case of the 2015 peace treaty

Dabi Besenio³

Keywords: *peace treaties, conflict resolution*

Introduction

Many of the conflicts now called ‘new wars’ are intra-state, nonconventional, and culture-sensitive conflicts having their origins in domestic rather than systemic factors (Kaldor, 2007). Civil wars are nefarious to the extent that they always levy the heaviest toll on civilians leading to senseless deaths, internal and external displacement of citizens, and in some instances as Salehyan, and Gleditsch (2006) have argued, regional instability arising from the external displacement of citizens.

The end of the Cold War signaled the beginning of a post-interstate wars era, by and large—and a focus instead on finding solutions to civil wars which were the major threats to security both state and human in the post-Cold War. However, as history has proven time and again, civil wars are susceptible to recidivism upon signing peace agreements and peace agreements are generally fragile peace achievements. Yet, war is often unacceptable (Licklider, 1995) and has to be stopped, which is why no

³ Dabi Besenio graduated in February 2021 from Nkumba University with M.A. International Relations and Diplomacy



effort should be spared to ensure that peace agreements hold upon their conclusion and signification and return enduring peace.

Ever since shortly her independence in 2011, South Sudan has been embroiled in a civil war that has produced peace agreements that have thus far failed to yield lasting peace

Study objectives

The study was about assessing the effectiveness of peace agreements in conflict resolution in South Sudan based on the 2015 peace treaty. It was guided by three objectives namely:

to investigate the root causes and drivers of the current conflict in South Sudan,
to analyze the nature, mandate, and role of the peace agreement (2015 peace treaty) and
to examine the challenge encountered in the implementation of the 2015 Peace treaty.

Methodology

The study was explanatory and employed a case study design. Both purposive and random sampling techniques were used to select a sample of 155 respondents, out of whom 150 participated in the study posting a 97% return rate.

A structured survey questionnaire and documentary review were used to collect data and SPSS version 20 was used for analyzing the data.



Key findings


The study found that the root causes and drivers of the conflict include the struggle for power, easy access to arms, ethnicity-based discrimination, desire to control oil wealth, land ownership disagreements between different ethnic groups.

The study also found that the 2015 peace treaty was prematurely signed; it failed to accommodate all stakeholders in the conflict and to take into account public opinion. It was also signed because of external pressure rather than because of the willingness of warring parties to come to a negotiated accommodation; thus, the agreement lacked a key ingredient, namely: commitment from the actors party to it.

Last but not least, the peace agreement the several challenges among which included: a challenge of the self-interest of stakeholders in the war effort; weak institutions and a culture of impunity; non-acceptance of the terms of the peace agreement; the continued presence of ethnic militias; absence of professionalism and discipline in the national army, the Sudanese People's Liberation Army; weak institutions and a culture of impunity.

Key recommendations

There should be sustained public information campaigns across the country, including greater efforts to solicit information from the public. There should be direct action taken against those with both operational and command



responsibility for flagrant violation of peace agreements. There should be an establishment of a temporary Transitional Authority. Finally, a new system of governance should be instituted, which is compatible with the social features of the country and not just a power-sharing deal between the warlords.

Key references

- Afriyie, F. A., Jisong, J., & Yaw Appiah, K. (2020). Comprehensive analysis of South Sudan conflict: determinants and repercussions. *Journal of Liberty and International Affairs*, 6(1), 33-47. <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-67602-7>
- Alozieuwa, S. (2014). Rebel Movements, Militia Groups and the Problematic of Contemporary African Political Leadership. *Journal of African Foreign Affairs*, 1(2), 9-29. Retrieved January 25, 2021, from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26664022>
- Aremu J. O. (2010). Conflicts in Africa: Meaning, Causes, Impact and Solution. *African Research Review*. Vol. 4 (4), Serial No. 17, October, 2010. Pp. 549 – 560. 3.
- Ashworth, P & Lucas, U. (2000). Achieving Empathy and Engagement: A practical approach to the design, conduct, and reporting of phenomenographic research. *Studies in Higher Education - STUD HIGH EDUC*. 25. 295-308. 10.1080/713696153.
- Nhema, A & Zeleza, P (2008). *The Roots of African Conflicts: The Causes and Costs*. Bibliovault OAI Repository, the University of Chicago Press.



Barltrop, R (2010). Leadership, trust and legitimacy in Southern Sudan's transition after 2005. Global Event Working Paper, presented at the 'Capacity is development' Global event, New York, 2010, sponsored by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).