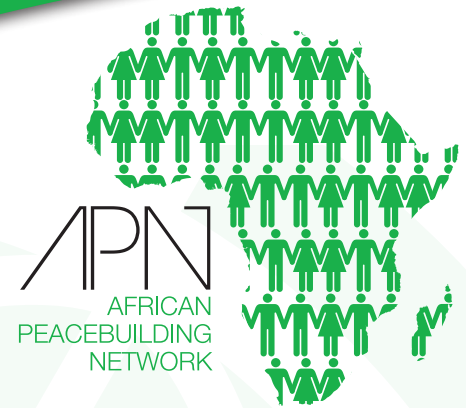




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Beyond Liberal Peace: *Transcending Elite Pacts and Militarized Politics in South Sudan*

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RECOMMENDATIONS

- **IGAD should ensure** inclusion of all relevant actors and create space for the renegotiation of the ARCISS provisions on governance and security, safeguard the meaningful participation of women, and ensure greater representation of South Sudanese society beyond the SPLM and its factions;
- **The AU should promote** a victim-centered and gender sensitive transitional justice process;
- **The TGNU should work** to demilitarize politics, strengthen democracy, foster accountability, and support the economy's diversification;
- **The International Community should utilize** UNMISS and the RPF to secure the provision of humanitarian relief.

The ongoing civil war in South Sudan was triggered by factionalism within the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), reflecting deep divisions and structural challenges within the South Sudanese elite and the state. Despite regional and international efforts at peacemaking and the signing of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (ARCISS) in August 2015, there remain episodes of conflict. This brief calls for a renewed political process that seeks to address the multiple levels of conflict, true reconciliation, and cooperation through recognition of mutual interests among emerging South Sudanese elites, and between them and the people through greater inclusivity in national dialogues and governance structures.

CONFLICT RELAPSE IN SOUTH SUDAN

Renewed violence in South Sudan has resulted in loss of life, rape, abduction, and torture with ethnic undertones; mass internal displacement and refugee emigration; the fragmentation of conflict actors; economic collapse; and food insecurity, malnutrition, and famine.¹ Although the relapse has been attributed to intra-SPLM factionalism and mistrust, it reflects deeper divisions within South Sudan; in particular, elites competing for power and access to state resources. These divisions include: exclusionary politics; limited capacity and reach of the "new" state; a gap between politico-military elites and the people; a deep sense of alienation, marginalization, and neglect of local grievances; and the politicization

¹ "Famine Declared in South Sudan," *Guardian*, February 20, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2017/feb/20/famine-declared-in-south-sudan>; USAID, "South Sudan – Crisis Fact Sheet #7, Fiscal Year (FY) 2017," May 9, 2017, <http://reliefweb.int/report/south-sudan/south-sudan-crisis-fact-sheet-7-fiscal-year-fy-2017>; and CARE International, "Inequality and Injustice: The Deteriorating Situation for Women and Girls in South Sudan's War," December 2016, <http://insights.careinternational.org.uk/publications/inequality-and-injustice-the-deteriorating-situation-for-women-and-girls-in-south-sudan-s-war>.

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of ethnicity. Also important are the culture of impunity, the prevalence of insecurity, and widespread poverty.²

ELITE PACTS AND MILITARIZED POLITICS: THE JOURNEY SO FAR

Peacemaking in South Sudan is underpinned by a subscription to the “liberal peace” paradigm, and the use of “deadline diplomacy” or time pressure to get warring parties to sign ceasefires and peace agreements to which they are not necessarily committed. Furthermore, the violence appears to be legitimized by the incorporation of politico-military elites who use it to access political power and representation in negotiations and in the subsequent transition period.

The preoccupation with reconciling national elites is a major weakness of the current approach. This approach fails to address the roots and multiple levels of conflict and violence. It also neglects the ways local and community level security arrangements have challenged, supported, or contributed towards the intractable conflict dynamics in South-Sudan.

Further, the peace process leading up to the ARCISS did not significantly address the divisions and contradictions within South Sudanese society, particularly between politico-military elites and society. Neglecting these gaps facilitates the politics of exclusion where civil society and citizen organizations have a limited say in the peace agreements that will profoundly shape their lives. The peace processes and agreements present a limited view of inclusivity, despite making provisions for the SPLM-in Opposition (SPLM-IO) in the power-sharing arrangement. Thus, the processes tend towards entrenching SPLM hegemony—failing to provide a framework for conflict transformation by changing South Sudan’s existing power relations.

The current process grants actors who wield violence a seat at the table, perpetuating militarized politics in South Sudan. The mindset that “only with the gun (or the status [of a fighter]) can a person make demands, either for food,

cattle, and shelter, or for political positions,”³ must be transformed for sustainable peace.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

To the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD):

- Ensure that the High-Level Revitalization Forum (HLRF) responds to the present conflict by ensuring inclusion of all relevant actors and creates space for the renegotiation of the ARCISS provisions on governance and security, as they no longer speak to the realities on the ground;
- Establish quotas to safeguard the meaningful participation of women as members of various political, military, and civil society configurations in the HLRF process; and,
- Ensure greater representation of South Sudanese society beyond the SPLM and its factions by facilitating civil society’s engagement in the HLRF process, and opening up a national platform for leadership and greater inclusivity in governance arrangements.

To the African Union (AU):

- Promote a transitional justice process that is victim-centered and gender sensitive;
- Ensure that sufficient attention is paid to the establishment of the Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing and the Compensation and Reparation Authority, to complement present efforts that are almost exclusively focused on the Hybrid Court of South Sudan; and,
- Ensure greater civil society participation, including cooperation with the Transitional Justice Working Group (TJWG) – South Sudan.

To the Transitional Government of National Unity (TGNU):

- Take concrete steps towards demilitarizing politics, and strengthening democratic norms, institutions, and practices in ways that facilitate accountability and responsiveness by the leadership to the needs and welfare of the citizens of South Sudan; and,
- Lay the foundations for diversifying the economy beyond dependence on oil, by developing agro-pastoralist and industrial sectors of the economy.

To the International Community:

- Utilize the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and the forthcoming Regional Protection Force (RPF) to “hold the space” for the provision of humanitarian relief.

² Sonja Theron, “Mapping Africa’s Conflict and Peacebuilding Terrain in South Sudan” (conference paper, Mapping Study of Peacebuilding and Security in Africa Convening Workshop, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, March 17–19, 2016; Ingrid Kircher, “Challenges to Security, Livelihoods, and Gender Justice in South Sudan: The Situation of the Dinka Agro-Pastoralist Communities in Lakes and Warrap States” (Oxfam Research Report, March 2013), <http://www.oxfamblogs.org/eastafrica/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/Challenges-to-Security-Livelihoods-and-Gender-Justice-in-South-Sudan.pdf>; Zaynab ElSawi, “Women Building Peace: The Sudanese Women Empowerment for Peace in Sudan,” in *Changing Their World*, ed. Srilatha Batliwala (Toronto: Association for Women’s Rights in Development, 2011); Paula Cristina Roque and Remember Miamingi, “Beyond ARCISS: New Fault Lines in South Sudan,” Institute for Security Studies, *East Africa Report* 9 (January 2017), <https://issafrica.org/research/east-africa-report/beyond-arciss-new-fault-lines-in-south-sudan>; and Jok Madut Jok, “Negotiating an End to the Current Civil War in South Sudan: What Lessons Can Sudan’s Comprehensive Peace Agreement Offer?” *Inclusive Political Settlements Papers* 16 (Berlin: Berghof Foundation, September 2016).

³ Annette Weber, “Women Without Arms: Gendered Fighter Constructions in Eritrea and Southern Sudan,” *International Journal of Conflict and Violence* 5, no. 2 (2011): 362.