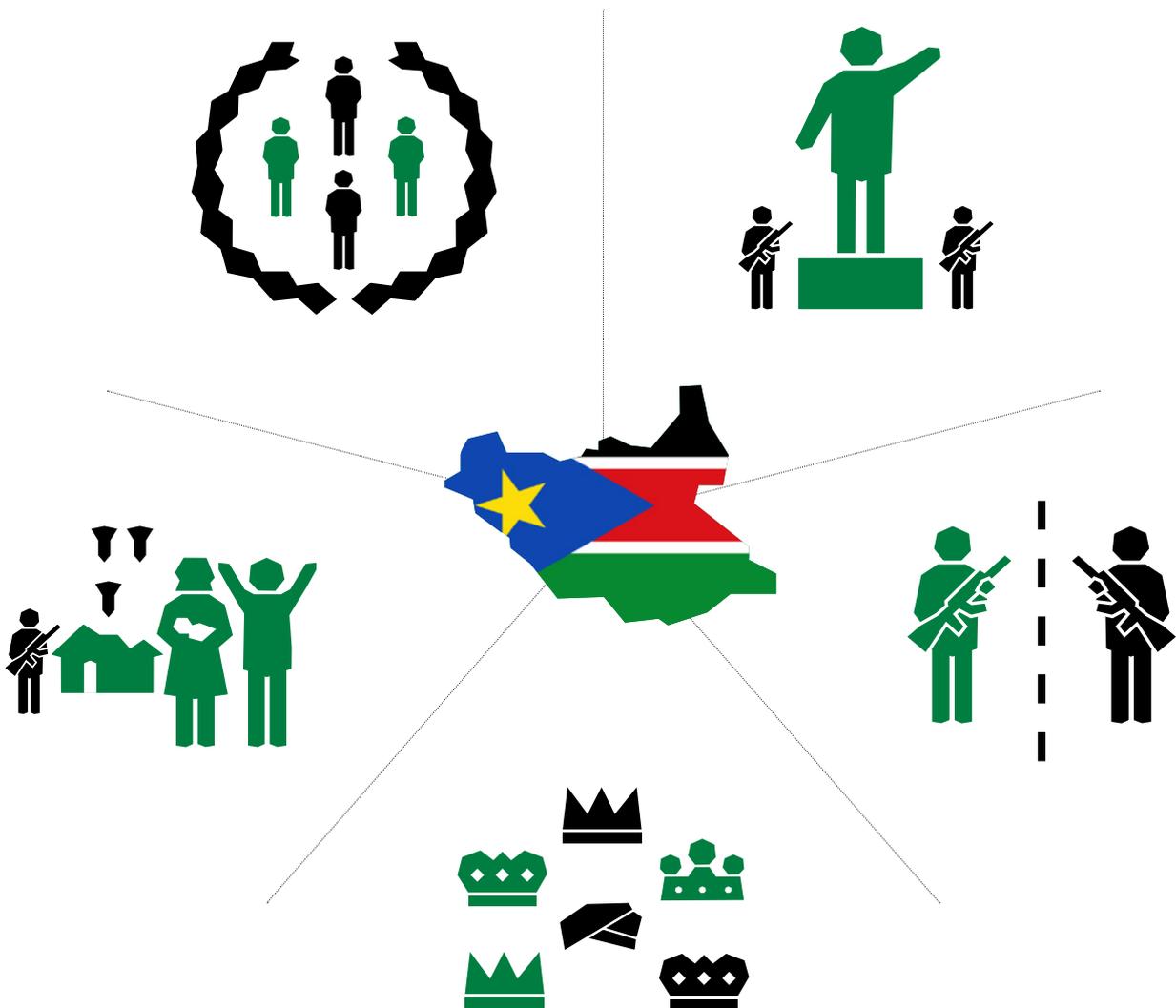


MONITORING THE SCENARIOS FOR SOUTH SUDAN IN 2020

PEACE: THE ONLY THING WORTH PURSUING



Concerned Citizens' Network for Peace

Colophon

November 2017

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The CCNP is a voluntary network of South Sudanese citizens, active in academia, civil society and/or religious institutions.

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MONITORING THE SCENARIOS FOR SOUTH SUDAN IN 2020

PEACE: THE ONLY THING WORTH PURSUING

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ARCSS	Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan (2015)
AU	African Union
EU	European Union
IDP	Internally displaced person
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
JMEC	Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission
NDM	National Democratic Movement
NEC	National Elections Commission
POC	Protection of civilians
SPLA	Sudan People's Liberation Army
SPLM	Sudan People's Liberation Movement
SPLA-IG	SPLA - in Government
SPLA-IO	SPLA - in Opposition
SPLM-IG	SPLM - in Government
SPLM-IO	SPLM - in Opposition
TGoNU	Transitional Government of National Unity
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in South Sudan
UPDF	Uganda People's Defence Force
USA	United States of America

FOREWORD

This document is the result of efforts by a group of concerned South Sudanese citizens from different walks of life who, putting aside our differences, come together to discuss the situation in our country and find ways to mitigate the dire state of affairs. Our aim is to alert all those who care about South Sudan and can change the course of events for the better. We hope this contribution sparks debate and constructive engagement in order to facilitate advocacy and the dissemination of information.

In 2015, many of us came together to discuss the future of South Sudan, resulting in the publication Scenarios for South Sudan in 2020, which was published in January 2016. Through the method of ‘scenario building and planning’, we were able to look outside the box and think about what our country’s future might look like, depending on how several uncertain trends develop. The outcomes were not easy to accept, but were necessary to open everyone’s eyes – inside and outside South Sudan. We shared and discussed the scenarios with some South Sudanese politicians, policy makers in and outside the country, other concerned citizens from academia, and youth, civil society and religious leaders. Most found it useful, but some were also afraid of what the future might hold.

When we held our previous discussions, the 2015 Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (ARCSS) was freshly signed and still upheld, but by mid-2016 a new round of fighting had erupted. The previous study warned that South Sudan runs the risk of major disintegration and civil war and that South-South dialogue is essential for stability and peace. With violence engulfing the entire country and insecurity growing, we felt it was time to reconvene and look again at the scenarios. This report is the result of our discussions and our great concern for the fate of our country, which is suffering so gravely. However, we could not have done this without the support of others. We therefore wish to thank PAX peace organisation and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) for providing the space, facilitation and technical assistance to make this happen. We also sincerely appreciate the contributions of colleagues who took part in the previous discussions, on which we have built further, but who could not join us this time.

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SUMMARY

In January 2016, five scenarios were published, describing the different directions the situation in South Sudan could possibly take: United in diversity, Divided leadership, Fragmentation, 21 Kingdoms and Dictatorship. This report provides an update – by monitoring developments since 2016 and analysing which scenarios the country currently is heading towards. As well as acting as an alert, policy options are provided to steer the country towards the most positive scenario: United in diversity.

Without swift and concerted action, South Sudan is heading into one of the darkest scenarios: Fragmentation, Dictatorship, or possibly 21 Kingdoms. All of these entail even worse conflict and must be prevented at all costs.

South Sudan's struggle for independence was to ensure that all South Sudanese people could live free and peaceful lives in a prospering country. Internal conflicts of the past cannot be settled by the current war, but only through a genuine political process based on a shared vision for a peaceful future in which South Sudan is United in diversity. Therefore, the authors call upon the wisdom of all South Sudanese parties to end the military strategy and come back to dialogue. At the same time, the international community has to come together and develop a united strategy to support progress towards the most positive scenario.

Policy implications for the South Sudanese parties, the international community and civil society include:

- (I) End the violence through a political process, by sincere cessation of hostilities, renewal of the political peace process which is mediated for a long term, and the development of a Transitional Authority of Technocrats that would allow for important reforms to be made before free and fair elections are held.
- (II) Transition to peace through dialogue by a broad-based inclusive national dialogue, the opening up of political and civic space, and support for local initiatives of reconciliation, healing and peacebuilding.
- (III) Support the population through international assistance by the intensification of humanitarian assistance, sufficient security provision to all citizens, and upgrading of the protection of civilians (POC) sites.

See Chapter IV for an elaboration of the policy implications.

I. INTRODUCTION

This report is based on inputs from a workshop held in Kampala, Uganda, in April 2017 and written feedback from participants, complemented with continued discussions in smaller groups and additional literature research to ensure that information was up to date at the time of publication.

It builds further on and monitors five scenarios that were developed in 2015 and published in January 2016: *Scenarios for South Sudan in 2020: Peace, the only thing worth fighting for.*¹ These scenarios are not intended to predict the future or to describe a desired future. Rather, they look at several possible futures to identify likely developments that might otherwise be overlooked. The major objective is to stimulate open debate and to motivate power holders and duty bearers to make decisions in order to foster the most positive scenarios – in this case a peaceful future for South Sudan – and to be prepared for any other scenario that may transpire.

SOUTH SUDAN SCENARIOS FOR 2020 REVISITED

The five scenarios described in the *Scenarios for South Sudan in 2020* report were intended to provide a picture of what South Sudan might look like in 2020, determined by three key uncertainties:

1. Will life in South Sudan be dominated by war and armed political conflict or will there predominantly be peace – or at least the absence of large-scale armed political violence?
2. Will South Sudan make progress towards good governance or will the country face a further downturn towards bad governance?
3. Will governance in South Sudan be further decentralised (by design or violently), or will there be no further decentralisation and central governance perhaps strengthened even further?

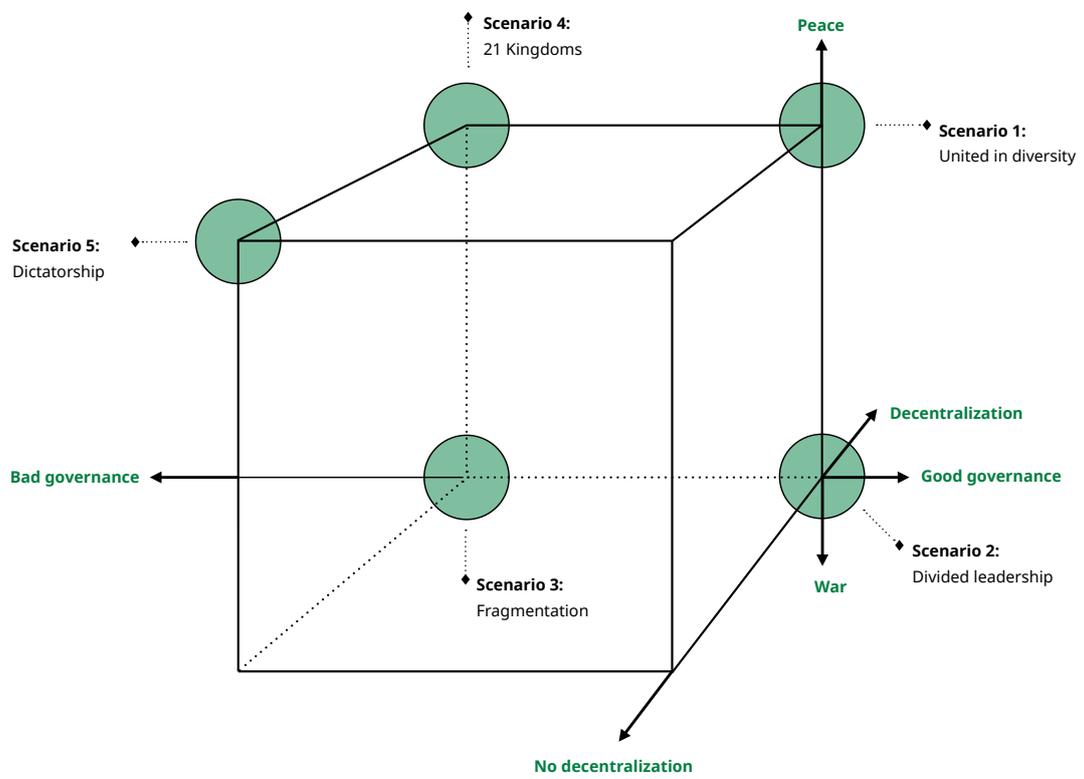
Figure 1 was drawn based on these three dimensions, from which five scenarios were developed.

For ease of reference, the five scenarios are summarised on pages 10-13.²

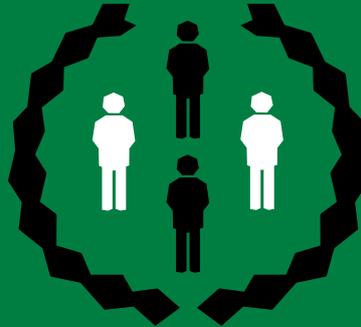
¹ PAX and SIPRI, *Scenarios for South Sudan in 2020: Peace, the only thing worth fighting for*, January 2016, <http://books.sipri.org/files/misc/SIPRI-PAX-16ss.pdf>

² For full descriptions, see: PAX and SIPRI (2016), *ibid.*

FIGURE 1: Scenarios framework



SOUTH SUDAN SCENARIOS FOR 2020 REVISITED



UNITED IN DIVERSITY

The 2015 peace agreement is implemented, the cessation of hostilities holds, while the dialogue between the parties continues and deals with problems of implementation. The political process opens up to other parties, by means of a truly inclusive national dialogue and constitutional process, leading to a confederal system further decentralised on the basis of service delivery. The new system has better guarantees for good governance, rule of law and human rights protection. Positions in government are inclusively shared and, as Juba's role is less central, control over central government has also become less relevant to fight over. The organisation of free and fair elections is one of the first steps in a long and difficult process towards sustainable peace, supported by the international community. By 2020, the root causes of the conflict are gradually being addressed, the economy improves, state institutions grow stronger, public service delivery improves and refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) return, while a process of reconciliation is underway and negative tribalism decreases.



DIVIDED LEADERSHIP

The 2015 peace agreement is implemented, but it is primarily a power-sharing agreement between the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement-In Government (SPLM-IG) and the Sudanese

People's Liberation Movement-In Opposition (SPLM-IO). As such, it is in many ways a repetition of the implementation of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement – an elite pact bringing temporary stability that does not deal with the root causes of the conflict. Political space does not open up and disagreement is fought out within the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM).

Although progress has been made on paper in the fields of good governance, rule of law and human rights, implementing institutions remain weak. In addition, the economy remains unstable, meaning that the population does not see sufficient peace dividends. Until the elections, the Transitional Government of National Unity (TGoNU) continues to function, but tensions are high and when the opposition loses it rejects the results. In the subsequent conflict, opposition forces occupy large parts of the Greater Upper Nile region, effectively splitting the country in two. The conflict is primarily fought along Dinka-Nuer lines, while the Equatorians are primarily appeased by the government. Most Nuer leave government-held areas and most Dinka have to flee the opposition territories.

In 2020, the war has stabilised with lower levels of violence along a frontline. Consequently, some of the improvements that had been made in good governance and development are maintained. The international community supports the SPLM-IG government, but the armed opposition is able to hold its military positions with the help of Sudan and diasporas.



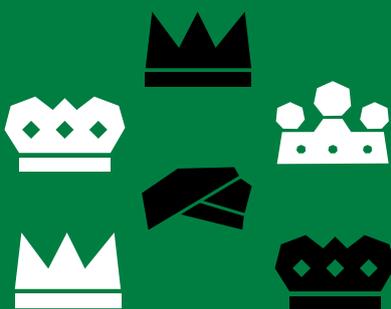
FRAGMENTATION

In spite of attempts by Salva Kiir (SPLM-IG) and Riek Machar (SPLM-IO) to keep their often more radical officers and supporters in line with the demands of the peace process, ceasefire violations and skirmishes spin out of control and the peace agreement breaks down. Many different groups take up arms and no external actor dares to risk intervening in this poisonous brew. Elites and educated people foresee what is coming and flee the country.

The Juba government is not able to keep up public service delivery, the economy collapses and famine strikes. Although the government manages to sustain itself well into 2017, once finances run out it is no longer able to buy allegiances and the last essential bits of its patrimonial network collapse, the system fragments and the state evaporates. In the absence of a common enemy, the SPLM-IO also splinters. The entire country gets embroiled in poisonous waves of killings and revenge killings based on historical ethnic and political feuds mixed with social and criminal violence. In the absence of rule of law and respect for human rights, and with an abundance of weapons in the country, extortion, theft and robbery

became the single easiest way to make a living. The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) is no longer able to protect the protection of civilians (POC) sites and the Security Council decides to withdraw the operation. Juba, particularly, becomes a centre of mass violence as all non-Equatorians are expelled.

In 2020, the situation in the Equatorias is relatively settled, while in the rest of the country politics has become local and about the highest price: life and security. Consequently, large parts of the country are violently depopulated and the majority of South Sudanese citizens are displaced and food insecure.



21 KINGDOMS

As the parties see the peace process primarily as an extended ceasefire and implementation is delayed, frustration among Equatorians increases. Local militia activity grows. Whispers of 'cleaning up the house' and 'fighting Dinka domination' become more frequent. Violence spreads to Juba, where Equatorian youth torch Dinka houses. As the government's control diminishes, these attacks become increasingly open and organised.

The Sudan People's Liberation Army-In Opposition (SPLA-IO) and the White Army launch an offensive and take the city. With Kiir ousted, Machar declares himself president. Despite the horrors that follow, the international community does very little. Uganda supports the remaining low-level insurgency of the Sudan People's Liberation Army-In Government (SPLA-IG). After the victory of SPLM-IO, a federal system of 21 states is rolled out. However, in the absence of a national reconciliation process, and as these states are drawn up on an ethnic basis, border conflicts and new demographic tensions lead to a second round of serious violence and ethnic migration. As the situation settles, a number of relatively ethnically homogeneous territories, balanced out borders and a more stable equilibrium in the multi-tribal states appear. Moreover, the new states' offices mean that the hunger for power of more leaders can be accommodated.

In 2020, some states do reasonably well in terms of good governance, rule of law, human rights, public service delivery and economic development, while others face ethnic conflicts and autocracy. As central government is weaker than before, there is less national cohesion and neighbouring countries increase their influence on South Sudanese soil. The international community has distanced itself from South Sudan, demanding justice for 'the impunity during the war that brought the government to power'.



DICTATORSHIP

With SPLM-IG never committed to the peace process and SPLM-IO unable to control its commanders, the SPLM-IG decides that 'enough is enough'. Although it does not win the war outright, with the help of the Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF) it comes close. The SPLA-IO starts to crumble and is reduced to a low-level insurgency. SPLA-IO commanders prefer to be on the winning side, and Kiir opens up his 'big tent' further and embraces anyone who had deserted him but is willing to return back to a 'town hall style' political system.

At the same time, he clamps down on and reduces the political space for any remaining opposition and dissent. The Equatorians, satisfied with federalisation of the newly-created 28 states system, largely support the SPLM-IG. However, as the political space reduces and state governors have to follow central party leadership, these newly-created states do not lead to real decentralisation.

In 2020, the SPLM remains the one dominant political party and decisions are made at the SPLM political marketplace. In many ways, the system is not directed at power sharing but at loot sharing. Governance is further determined by heavy-handed repression. Human rights are regularly violated, there is no right of assembly or freedom of speech, and democratic access remains problematic. Consequently, Kiir wins the elections without substantial competition. Nonetheless, the economy is improving and expenditure on public service provision increases. The humanitarian situation and people's livelihoods improve in the areas without insurgency. In short, the situation is not 'positive peace' but 'forced stability', likely to once again break down before real peace is reached.

Developments towards one of these five scenarios depend largely on the answers to and trends regarding the following four questions:

1. Will the 2015 ARCSS peace agreement hold?
2. Will the peace process deal with the root causes of conflict and open up to other tribal or regional groups, and include civil society and religious leaders?
3. Will the election results be widely accepted, particularly by the main power brokers?
4. Will Equatorians choose sides and, if so, support the SPLM-IG or SPLM-IO?

In order to analyse where the country is currently heading, in the next chapter we look at development trends since 2016.

II. DEVELOPMENTS SINCE 2016

Since publication of Scenarios for South Sudan in 2020, in early 2016, many events have taken place in South Sudan and there have been many political developments. Following a variety of indicators on different topics, these developments can be mapped and structured against the five scenarios, providing insights into how the situation has changed.

MORE ARMED CONFLICT, WHILE THE POLITICAL SYSTEM AND PEACE PROCESS BREAK DOWN

After the Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan (ARCSS) was signed – with reservations – in August 2015, implementation was slow to get started. The formation of the TGoNU, especially, stalled over security arrangements in Juba, among other things. After significant international pressure, the obstacles were finally resolved in April 2016 and Machar returned to Juba. The capital city then hosted two armies (SPLA-IG and SPLA-IO), which still needed to be reformed into one professional national army. Military confrontations between both sides diminished after August 2015, but did not cease completely. The ARCSS provided a political framework for governance, elections and important reforms, and included the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism (JMEC) for oversight. However, there was great distrust between the two biggest parties to the agreement, the SPLM-IG and SPLM-IO. Moreover, while both sides tried to convince the international community that they were implementing the peace agreement, in practice they held on to the option of military victory.

In early July 2016, growing tensions between the SPLM-IG and SPLM-IO saw the Presidential Palace guards of President Kiir and then-First Vice President Machar engaged in heavy fighting against each other, leaving many casualties around the palace. Eventually, Riek Machar managed to escape to his house in the Jebel area. Two days later his compound was attacked, including by aerial bombardment, and Machar escaped, eventually reaching the Democratic Republic of Congo and finally ending up in South Africa.

DISINTEGRATION OF THE POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

The events of July 2016 changed the internal dynamics of the conflict in South Sudan and the way in which the international community positioned itself. Under the pretext that Machar had 'left his office vacant' and did not return after appeals from the government, Taban Deng Gai, previously SPLM-IO's chief negotiator, was sworn in as the new First Vice President representing the SPLM-IO in the TGoNU. However, Taban Deng got only partial support from other SPLM-IO leaders, resulting in a split between those supporting him and those who remained loyal to Machar.³

Moreover, as a result of the increasing tensions in the Equatorias and Northern Bahr-el-Ghazal, even more (armed) opposition groups sprung up. Alongside the SPLM-IO (under Machar), other large groups emerged, such as the National Democratic Movement (NDM, Lam Akol), the South Sudan National Movement for Change (SSNMC, Joseph Bakasoro)

³ Joshua Craze, 'Legitimacy, exclusion, and power: Taban Deng Gai and the South Sudan peace process', *HSBA Issue Brief, No.25, December 2016*, <<http://www.smallarmssurveysudan.org/fileadmin/docs/issue-briefs/HSBA-IB25-Taban-Deng-Gai-Dec-2016.pdf>>.

and the National Salvation Front (NAS, Thomas Cirilo).⁴ These groups seem to coordinate among themselves and publish joint statements while, at the same time, leading members sometimes move from one party to the other. Whether these movements are based on vision, personal interests and/or geographical or ethnic affiliation is not clear.

Serious internal tensions are also at play in the SPLM-IG, which might potentially further fragment the party. In May 2017, increasing frictions between President Salva Kiir and Army Chief Paul Malong came to a climax when Kiir sacked Malong. Although these tensions have not yet led to violent clashes, they have the potential to do so.⁵

The collapsed economy means that the patronage system, which used to guarantee the main power holders a share in the economy, can no longer function. Currently, the gains of patronage are the spoils of war, the possibility of salaries (if and when they come on line) and humanitarian aid, with perhaps promises of positions and more fragmentation of territories into smaller administrative units. Consequently, political and military leaders are unable to guarantee patronage networks their dues, causing severe local and national tensions that are diverted away from the centre through manipulation, leading to upsurges in violent intra-communal violence. The 'political and social glue' that was the economy is now gone.⁶

INCREASING TRIBAL DIVISIONS AND INCREASING PUBLIC FRUSTRATION

In the absence of stability and rule of law in many parts of the country, the tribe has become the main source of security. However, the broader conflict trend cannot be understood as simply tribal. By force or persuasion, the politico-military leaders of the various factions have sought the loyalty of local armed actors, frequently splitting communities as their leaders take sides. This has increased tribal divisions and, what started out as a political conflict, has been transformed into an ethnic war beyond simply politics. The UN Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Adama Dieng, warned of a 'potential for genocide' in South Sudan. In his words: 'Inflammatory rhetoric, stereotyping and name calling have been accompanied by targeted killings and rape of members of particular ethnic groups, and by violent attacks against individuals or communities on the basis of their perceived political affiliation.'⁷

Moreover, the conflict has expanded in magnitude as well as in location. While initially the conflict had been fought mainly in Greater Upper Nile region and primarily along Nuer-Dinka lines, now fighting has engulfed the entire country, most notably including the Equatorias and Bahr-el-Ghazal. Tensions have been growing there since the change in governance

4 These four, together with SPLM-Leaders (Former Detainees) and People's Democratic Movement (PDM, Hakim Dario) – which have no armed wings – form the Political Opposition Forces. See: *The Political Opposition Forces, Press Release, 17 April 2017*, <<http://www.documentcloud.org/documents/3671473-South-Sudan-s-Joint-Opposition-Press-Statement.html>>.

5 Al Jazeera, *South Sudan's Kiir replaces army chief Paul Malong, 9 May 2017*, <<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/05/south-sudan-kiir-replaces-army-chief-paul-malong-170509211057369.html>>.

6 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre, *Overview of corruption and anti-corruption in South Sudan, February 2013*, <http://www.u4.no/publications/south-sudan-overview-of-corruption-and-anti-corruption/>

7 United Nations, *Media Briefing by Adama Dieng, United Nations Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide on his visit to South Sudan, Press Release, Juba, 11 November 2016*.

structure from 10 to 28 states in 2015, which created animosity over leadership and internal borders. The number of intercommunal conflicts has also risen sharply. More and more communities are retaliating against each other, diminishing the space for reconciliation. In the explosion of violence since July 2016, citizens in the Equatorias especially have become victims of large-scale human rights violations and indiscriminate murder, primarily by SPLA-IG soldiers.⁸ Anti-government sentiment in the Equatorias had been growing under the surface, but now anti-government – and by extension anti-Dinka – sentiment has reached boiling point. This is reflected in increasing public frustration and limited protests combined with the appearance of new armed groups.

INTENSIFYING ROOT CAUSES AND CONTESTED NATIONAL DIALOGUE

South Sudan's current conflicts are to a great extent traceable to unresolved previous (sub)national conflicts, unaddressed grievances among all layers of society, and impunity for past crimes. Since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the Sudanese government and the SPLM/A in 2005, the focus in South Sudan has been on state formation and development. Too little attention went to reconciling the different (ethnic) elites and communities who had either been on different sides of the north-south conflict, or had a history of intensified inter-communal fighting. Alongside this, there is a dominant 'liberator narrative' by which those who fought for the 'liberation' of South Sudan from the north are entitled to state power and other related benefits, excluding all others.⁹ The two biggest ethnic groups in South Sudan, the Dinka and Nuer, were strongly represented in the war against the government of Sudan, and now dominate the post-war discourse. In essence, Dinka and Nuer leaders still fight over the liberator narrative and who is 'entitled' to overall power and related benefits. In order to tackle the root causes of conflict, achieve reconciliation among communities and break the cycle of violence, revenge and impunity, investment is needed in long-term processes based on local practices, needs and priorities. In practice, too little was done and underlying tensions have only increased.

This is reflected in the national dialogue announced by Kiir in December 2016. At its official launch, Kiir invited everyone except Machar to participate in the dialogue. The government-initiated national dialogue immediately met with a lot of distrust and criticism, leading Kiir to distance himself from the process to make it more impartial.¹⁰ Nevertheless, with one of the main protagonists and his supporters not participating, no national dialogue can be truly national and therefore genuine.¹¹

8 Alan Boswell, 'Spreading Fallout: The collapse of the ARCSS and new conflict along the Equatorias-DRC border', *HSBA Issue Brief, No.28, May 2017*, <<http://www.smallarmssurveysudan.org/fileadmin/docs/issue-briefs/HSBA-IB28-Spreading-Fallout.pdf>>.

9 This narrative is complex as it gives hierarchy to different members of South Sudanese society, in which (former) refugees rank low, as shown in the commonly heard phrase, "Where were you when we were fighting?" Also see: Robert Gerenge, 'South Sudan's December 2013 conflict: bolting state-building fault lines with social capital', *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*, 15(3), Jan 2015, pp. 85–109.

10 Parach Mach, 'South Sudan president starts national dialogue process', *Anadolu Ajansi*, 22 May 2017, <http://aa.com.tr/en/africa/south-sudan-president-starts-national-dialogue-process/823742>; Nabeel Bijaio, 'President No Longer Runs South Sudan National Dialogue', *Voice of America*, 1 June 2017, <<https://www.voanews.com/a/president-no-longer-runs-south-sudan-national-dialogue/3883157.html>>.

11 United Nations, Security Council, 'Letter dated 13 April 2017 from the Panel of Experts on South Sudan established pursuant to Security Council resolution 2206 (2015) addressed to the President of the Security Council', S/2017/326, 13 April 2017, pp. 11–12.

NO REAL DECENTRALISATION: CENTRAL GOVERNANCE REMAINS THE DETERMINING FACTOR

By the end of 2015, just after signing of the ARCSS, the presidential decree to form 28 states in support of further decentralisation was unilaterally adopted by the SPLM-IG parliament. This was contentious as the SPLM-IO felt that it had not been consulted and did not agree to the process, viewing it as a violation of the ARCSS. In addition, the newly appointed leaders did not get any technical or financial support so it did not lead to improved service delivery locally. Moreover, it led to tensions and clashes over political leadership and borders in several regions, especially in former Upper Nile and Western Bahr el Ghazal states. However, it did not stand in the way of Machar's initial return in 2016.¹² After the July events, the government continued to set up new states. In early 2017, four additional states were created, making a total of 32.¹³

Militarily, SPLA-IG controls most of the main towns, but not large stretches of territory. By placing allies in charge of the 32 states, its network of control is being expanded and more power brokers can be welcomed into the government's big tent. Generally, these decisions are seen as a way to strengthen control by the centre, rather than decentralising governance and delivering services. As such, control over central government in Juba remains of major importance and a source of great contention.

DETERIORATING ECONOMY, DECLINING PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY AND DECREASING GOVERNANCE STRENGTH

South Sudan's economic situation has deteriorated sharply and there are no signs of reversal. At approximately 130,000 barrels per day,¹⁴ oil production is low compared with before the outbreak of war, and the income it generates is small given the hefty transport fees that have to be paid to Sudan.¹⁵ To finance the war, the government has turned to printing money. Consequently, inflation reached 362% in June 2017, having peaked at 836% in October 2016.¹⁶ The South Sudanese pound continues to depreciate against the US dollar and persistent government salary backlogs further decrease household purchasing power.¹⁷ Given these difficult conditions, a number of international banks have reduced or withdrawn their operations from the country.¹⁸ The South Sudanese government has asked international donors to fund one-third of its budget but, given high levels of corruption and conflict and a lack of accountability, Western governments are no longer feeling generous.¹⁹ While the government's service delivery and capacity outside the military sphere has never been strong, renewed conflict has led to what some call a state of 'collapse'. Frequent long-

12 See for more detail: Stimson Center, *The 28 states system in South Sudan, Briefing Note, 9 August 2016*, <https://www.stimson.org/sites/default/files/file-attachments/Stimson_StatesBriefingNote_9Aug16.pdf>.

13 Sudan Tribune, 'South Sudanese President creates four more states', 15 January 2017, <<http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article61403>>.

14 Reuters, 'South Sudan aims to more than double oil output in 2017/18', 27 January 2017, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-southsudan-oil/south-sudan-aims-to-more-than-double-oil-output-in-2017-18-idUSKBN15B1CD>

15 United Nations, Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on South Sudan (covering the period from 2 March to 1 June 2017), S/2017/505, 15 June 2017; and Dumo, D., 'South Sudan asks donors to pay for a third of national budget', Reuters, 7 July 2017.

16 The Republic of South Sudan National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) Consumer Price Index for South Sudan June 2017, Press release, 23 June 2017.

17 United Nations, Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on South Sudan (covering the period 2 March to 1 June 2017), S/2017/505, 15 June 2017.

18 'Kenya's Equity closes bank branches in war-torn South Sudan', Reuters, 24 May 2017.

19 Dumo, D., 'South Sudan asks donors to pay for a third of national budget', Reuters, 7 July 2017.

lasting power outages, months of salary payment backlogs, the rising cost of fuel (when it is available), an increase in crime, a further breakdown in rule of law and poor basic services, including hospitals with no medicine, indicate the state public services are in.²⁰

HUMANITARIAN DOWNTURN

The humanitarian situation has deteriorated further. In May 2017, some 7.5 million South Sudanese were in need, with 5.5 million facing severe food insecurity and some 1.46 million on the brink of famine.²¹ This situation has continued. Supplies to these communities are hampered by insecurity and, in some cases, a blunt denial of humanitarian access. In the meantime, the number of displaced people has reached more than 3.9 million, with some 1.9 million IDPs and 2 million refugees in neighbouring countries.²² UNHCR has called this mass exodus 'the world's fastest growing refugee crisis'.²³ The hastily-set-up POC sites located in UNMISS bases host some 218,000 civilians seeking safety while, particularly in times of crisis, civilians also find refuge in local churches, such as in Wau.²⁴

INCREASING HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AND EVAPORATING HOPES FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE AND RULE OF LAW

The level of human rights violations in South Sudan has been high since December 2013 but, since the renewed outbreak of conflict in July 2016, there has been a further massive increase, with gross violations and abuses spreading across the country with total impunity.²⁵ Many young boys have been recruited on all sides, and many have disappeared. In Juba, political detainees are being held without any form of trial or recourse and often being tortured.²⁶ Many of these violations take place within the context of the armed conflict, but they are not limited to it. The economic meltdown increases crime rates, with some (unpaid) armed forces having turned to crime.²⁷ Politically motivated detention is widespread as is, for example, executive interference in the justice system. Good governance and the rule of law as a whole have taken a downward turn.²⁸ South Sudan is listed as the second most corrupt

20 Patinkin, J., "It's like Florence Nightingale's time": South Sudan's public services collapse', *The Guardian*, 27 May 2016.

21 OCHA, South Sudan: Humanitarian Dashboard as of 31 May 2017, <<http://reliefweb.int/report/south-sudan/south-sudan-humanitarian-dashboard-31-may-2017>>.

22 OCHA, South Sudan: Humanitarian Dashboard as of 31 July 2017, <<http://reliefweb.int/report/south-sudan/south-sudan-humanitarian-dashboard-31-july-2017>>.

23 UNHCR, 'Over US\$1.4 billion needed for South Sudan refugees in 2017', Press Release, 15 May 2017, <<http://www.unhcr.org/news/press/2017/5/591966294/us14-billion-needed-south-sudan-refugees-2017.html>>.

24 United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), Media & Spokesperson Unit Communications & Public Information Section, POC Update, 24 July 2017, <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/170724_poc_update_-_172.pdf>; Craig, J., 'Thousands of South Sudanese IDPs Take Shelter at Wau Church', *Voice of America*, 13 December 2016.

25 United Nations, Human Rights Council, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, Thirty-fourth session, A/HRC/34/63, 6 Mar. 2017; Human Rights Watch, 'Soldiers assume we are rebels: Escalating Violence and Abuses in South Sudan's Equatorias', 1 August 2017, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2017/08/01/soldiers-assume-we-are-rebels/escalating-violence-and-abuses-south-sudans>

26 Amnesty International, 'South Sudan: Open Letter from Secretary-General Salil Shetty to President Salva Kiir on prolonged detentions, enforced disappearances, and reported deaths while in government custody', 28 March 2017, <<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr65/5970/2017/en/>>.

27 Juba Eye, 'Defense Minister says some security forces behind night crimes in Juba', 30 August 2017, <https://jubaeye.com/defence-minister-says-some-security-forces-are-behind-night-crimes-in-juba/>

28 United Nations, Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on South Sudan (covering the period 2 March to 1 June 2017), S/2017/505, 15 June 2017.

country in the world,²⁹ and major leaders and their families have reportedly plundered the country's resources.³⁰

SHRINKING POLITICAL SPACE

Civic and political space in South Sudan has shrunk significantly. Authorities have harassed, intimidated and arbitrarily arrested journalists and civil society actors. In February 2016, the South Sudan Legislative Assembly (SSLA) passed a bill allowing the government to regulate, close and seize NGOs' assets if their activities are considered political. Six months later, the government threatened to shut down a number of NGOs.³¹ In July 2017, it blocked access to two major online media outlets hosted from abroad, Sudan Tribune and Radio Tamazuj, over what it called 'hostile' reporting.³²

NO INCLUSIVE POWER SHARING AND NO ELECTIONS ON THE HORIZON

With the renewal of conflict after the events of July 2016, the power-sharing agreement also broke down, meaning that the inclusiveness of the current government has also decreased. The UN Panel of Experts on South Sudan concluded that the country is left: 'with a political arrangement between the President, Salva Kiir, and the First Vice-President, Taban Deng Gai, that does not meaningfully include significant segments of the opposition, including major elements of SPLM/A-IO, other political factions and many non-Dinka communities, including large constituencies of the Nuer and the Equatorian tribes and subtribes.'³³ Although elections are still planned for 2018 and Kiir seeks to run in them, due to the ongoing conflict it is becoming increasingly improbable that they will take place according to schedule. At the same time, Kiir has announced that he will step down once the war is over.³⁴ Under the ARCSS, a National Constitution Amendment Commission (NCAC) should have been set up, which is mandated to amend the National Elections Act (NEA) and reconstitute the National Elections Commission (NEC). However, no progress has been made so far and therefore none of the deadlines have been met.³⁵ Alongside this and the overall insecurity, and with almost half the population uprooted, carrying out elections will be very difficult.

NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES' INERTIA AND INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY'S FATIGUE

The international community – notably the USA, UK, Norway and EU – has invested heavily in South Sudan's development since 2005. It supported South Sudan's independence and was determined that the new state should succeed. However, the massive attention South Sudan received largely ignored the widespread grievances over past conflicts, and nor could it change the leadership's military mind-set. After conflict broke out in December

29 Transparency International, 'Corruption Perceptions Index 2016', 25 January 2017, <https://www.transparency.org/news/feature/corruption_perceptions_index_2016#table>.

30 The Sentry, *War Crimes Shouldn't Pay: Stopping the looting and destruction in South Sudan*, September 2016.

31 Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2017: Events of 2016, 2017*, pp. 549–553.

32 Francis, O., 'South Sudan Blocks Two News Websites, Citing 'Hostile' Reporting', Bloomberg, 17 July 2017, <<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-07-17/south-sudan-blocks-two-news-websites-citing-hostile-reporting>>.

33 United Nations, Security Council, 'Letter dated 13 April 2017 from the Panel of Experts on South Sudan established pursuant to Security Council resolution 2206 (2015) addressed to the President of the Security Council', S/2017/326, 13 April 2017, pp. 6-7.

34 Sudan Tribune, South Sudan president says will leave power after war', 1 September 2017, <http://sudantribune.com/spip.php?article63393>

35 Lynch, J., 'South Sudan president to seek election in 2018: Spokesman', Associated Press, 8 Feb. 2017; Elamu, D., 'News Analysis: South Sudan may miss 2018 elections: experts', Xinhua, 20 Feb. 2017.

2013, neighbouring countries, through the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), were quick to respond and mediated political talks. They received back-up from the UN, African Union (AU), the Troika (USA, UK and Norway), China and the EU, which resulted in the ARCSS of August 2015. Continued monitoring of the agreement was secured through the JMEC and all foreign forces – in particular the UPDF, which supported the SPLM-IG against the SPLA-IO – were withdrawn within the context of the ARCSS. However, when implementation stalled or actions in violation of the agreement, by both parties, took place, the agreement's guarantors did not act and there were no consequences attached.

Many countries and institutions were quick to denounce the violence that followed the July 2016 events, but no significant actions have been taken. With Machar in exile, Kiir as the elected President, the SPLM-IG the strongest militarily, and Taban Deng representing the SPLM-IO in the TGoNU, the USA hoped the conflict could be won and opted to support the strongest party, the SPLM-IG.³⁶ While the IGAD countries had initially denounced the replacement of Machar as First Vice President, they followed suit. This strategy of tacitly agreeing to keep Machar away from South Sudan undermined the ARCISS agreement and ignored the discontent within SPLM-IG and opposition groups, and was therefore unable to contribute to stability.

Currently, the international community has no multilateral political strategy and many international diplomats seem tired of the situation. Hence, the crisis in South Sudan is not a priority on the international agenda. Some governments hold on to the idea that there is a TGoNU and that the ARCSS is being implemented, while others have recently issued statements saying that they consider ARCSS to be obsolete.³⁷ IGAD member states have turned to bilateral efforts, mainly directed by economic and national security interests.³⁸ For example, Uganda's President Museveni is trying to unite the SPLM, which would merely mean a return to the status quo that led to the conflict.³⁹ Above all, the international community is hampered by its fatigue. Most governments are aware of the dire situation, some even call it 'genocidal', but none is willing to take further action.⁴⁰ Basically, their efforts are directed towards dealing with the results of the conflict – i.e. displacement, refugees and food insecurity – by providing emergency aid and peace keeping, rather than at addressing its root causes.

36 *Sudan Tribune*, US official says appointment of S. Sudan's first VP "legal", 22 August 2016, <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article60010>

37 Reuters, Western donors freeze support for 'obsolete' South Sudan peace deal, 21 July 2017. <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-southsudan-un-rest-idUSKBN1A61XG>

38 United Nations, Security Council, 'Letter dated 13 April 2017 from the Panel of Experts on South Sudan established pursuant to Security Council resolution 2206 (2015) addressed to the President of the Security Council', S/2017/326, 13 April 2017, pp. 12-15.

39 'IGAD ministers hail Museveni on South Sudan peace initiative', *The Independent*, 25 July 2017, <<https://www.independent.co.ug/igad-ministers-hail-museveni-south-sudan-peace-initiative/>>.

40 Reuters, 'UK says killings in South Sudan conflict amount to genocide', 12 April 2017. <http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-southsudan-war-idUKKBN17E2U1>

III. PLACING SOUTH SUDAN IN THE SCENARIO GRID

By placing the analysis of the above indicators against the background of the scenarios, it becomes possible to monitor how South Sudan has developed and towards which scenarios the country is currently heading.

NEAR TO FRAGMENTATION OR DICTATORSHIP? OR 21 KINGDOMS?

From the above indicators it becomes clear that, since July 2016, there have been more fighting factions and the internal stability of SPLM/A-IG and SPLM/A-IO seems to have diminished. Politics has become local and factions are primarily based on ethnic affiliation. The economy and the state as a whole are in the process of collapsing, while the humanitarian crises are beyond imagination. These developments point in the direction of a Fragmentation scenario. At the same time, although support for the current government has diminished, the SPLM/A-IG remains militarily more powerful. Armed opposition is widespread, but the different opposition groups do not necessarily have a common political agenda. If they stay divided, there is a real possibility that they will, by and large, be defeated. In the meantime, civil and political space in the country is shrinking and the human rights and good governance situation is deteriorating further. The SPLM-IG is currently trying to 'buy in' allegiance, especially among the Equatorians, which would weaken SPLM-IO. These developments point in the direction of a Dictatorship scenario.

For the moment, the situation in South Sudan resembles mostly and more or less equally these two scenarios – Fragmentation and Dictatorship. While to some the Dictatorship scenario may sound favourable over a Fragmentation scenario, this would ignore the danger that holding on to such short-term stability runs the risk of war in the long run. Short-term stability should not be mistaken for durable peace.

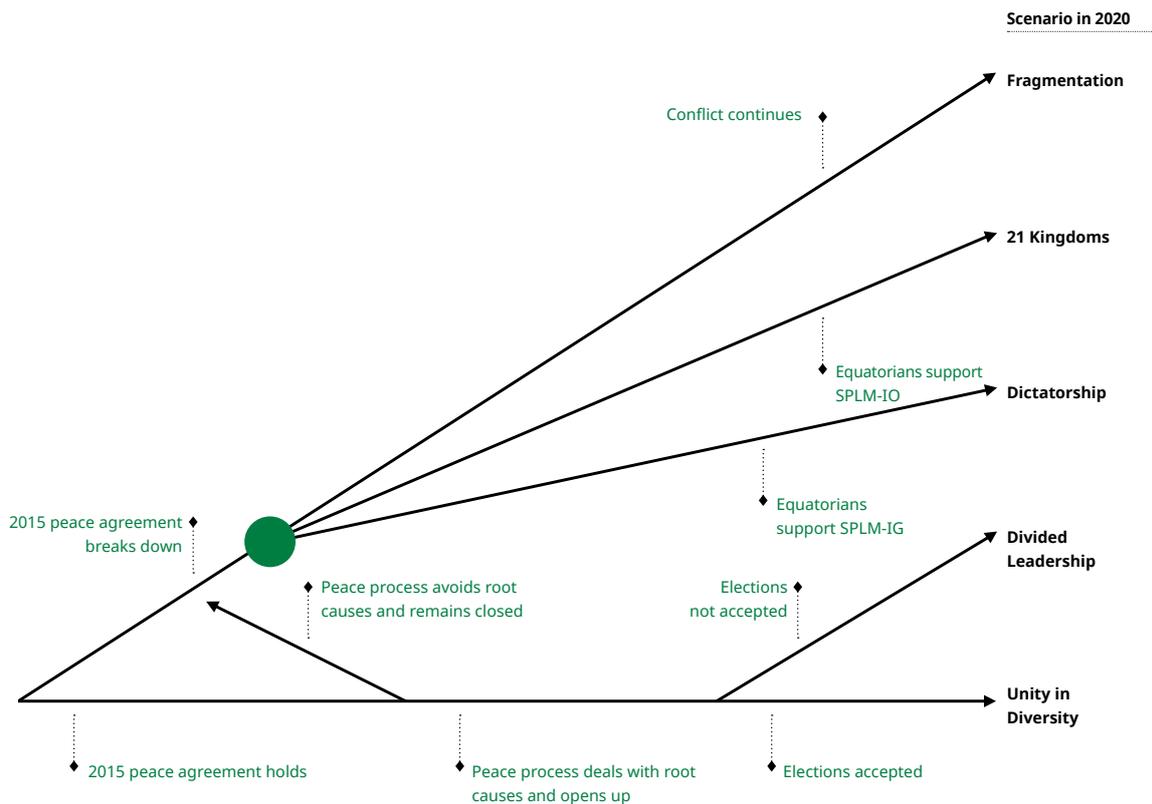
In fact, many of the developments in the scenarios Fragmentation and Dictatorship can also be recognised in the events leading to the scenario 21 Kingdoms. The increasing, though isolated, protests and massive frustration – especially in the Equatorias – resulting from Dictatorship scenario-like characteristics can eventually lead to a 21 Kingdoms or Fragmentation scenario. Although, given the current situation in the political arena and on the battlefield, it does not look as though a victory for the SPLM-IO or a different rebel organisation is imminent, it cannot be excluded. The 21 Kingdoms scenario therefore remains a real possibility.

The indicators show that the current situation least resembles the scenarios Divided leadership and United in diversity. Both scenarios would require greater implementation of the ARCSS. There is also insufficient political reform and economic stability. As the peace process has stalled, with fighting continuing and the ARCSS implementation period soon coming to an end, South Sudan seems the furthest away from the only more peaceful scenario, United in diversity.

The above description of the indicators for the different scenarios also resembles the framework of the paths in which the five different scenarios develop. Since publication of the

Scenarios for South Sudan in 2020 report, when implementation of the ARCSS was a realistic scenario, the situation in South Sudan has deteriorated significantly. The peace agreement has de facto broken down, in essence ruling out the scenarios Divided leadership and United in diversity. Within the framework of the paths in which the five different scenarios develop, in mid-2017 the country is at a crossroads. If the current trend of continuing conflict endures, the country is likely to find itself in a scenario in which the SPLM-IG wins, one in which the SPLM-IO wins, or one in which governance in the country fragments – respectively the scenarios Dictatorship, 21 Kingdoms or Fragmentation. Increasingly, it is becoming difficult for the country to return to a path leading to the scenario United in diversity. Although that scenario may not be ideal, and it would still have been difficult to implement the ARCSS, it is the only option if the people of South Sudan – leadership and citizens alike – are to move towards a peaceful and stable future (see Figure 2).⁴¹

FIGURE 2: Paths towards the scenarios: green dot indicating point in developments mid-2017



41 Note: The storylines of the five scenarios are not 'fixed' stories of how things will go, but describe trends that can lead to a particular scenario in 2020.

IS 'UNITED IN DIVERSITY' STILL POSSIBLE?

United in diversity is the only positive scenario for South Sudan by 2020 that holds some realism and may lead eventually to sustainable peace. In order to achieve that, a massive shift in the positioning of the warring parties and in the support of the international community is needed. The implementation of ARCSS lags behind substantially and, indeed, it is regarded by many as obsolete. Whatever the case, the agreement contains important reforms and mechanisms that could unite the country in a peaceful way. In order to succeed, historical grievances and the root causes of the political conflict must be addressed countrywide – including among refugees – and reconciliation processes started. These are long-term processes. In the meantime, institutions need to be reformed, a democratic governance system set up, and the rule of law restored. Such technical and structural reforms require a comprehensive approach with a long-term outlook, which will be elaborated on in the next chapter.

IV. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

As the trends described in Chapter III show, South Sudan is on course towards the worst scenarios – Fragmentation, Dictatorship and 21 Kingdoms. This situation must be reversed at all costs. The 2020 scenarios show that continuing in this direction will mean further suffering and devastation, beyond what the country can bear. We therefore call again upon the wisdom of the leaders of all South Sudanese parties to act for the general good of all citizens.

A comprehensive approach is required, consisting of three pillars: (I) end the violence through a political process; (II) transition to peace through dialogue; and (III) support the population through assistance. The first two pillars are primarily directed at enabling a future towards the scenario United in diversity and preventing the worst – Fragmentation – from happening. The third pillar, supporting the population, will be important under the best of conditions, but becomes even more vital in the scenario Fragmentation.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE SOUTH SUDANESE PARTIES

South Sudan has struggled to become independent in order for all its citizens to live free and peaceful lives in a prospering country. The internal conflicts of the past cannot be settled by war, only through a genuine political process based on a shared vision for a peaceful future in which we are United in diversity. We therefore call upon the wisdom of all South Sudanese leaders to end their military strategies and come back to dialogue.

I. End the violence through a political process

End the war

First and foremost, the violent conflict has to be stopped. As this report shows, there is no military solution; continuation of the civil war will lead to a victory of devastation. The conflict can only be solved through a mediated, inclusive political process.

- The government and opposition groups need to immediately stop their belligerency, lay down their weapons, obey the call for cessation of hostilities immediately, and return to the negotiating table to engage in dialogue.
- The government and opposition groups need to immediately stop the distribution of arms to civilian groups.

Renew the political process

The peace process – which is currently barely alive, if not dead – needs to be revived, but also revised and opened up to become broad-based and inclusive, to prevent its results from again becoming an elite deal doomed to eventually break down. Key to this process is dealing with the many years and multiple layers of conflict, and changing the narrative from ‘the right to power’ to ‘a shared peaceful future’.

- The government and opposition groups need to develop their vision for a shared peaceful future, instead of continuing along the ‘right to power’ narrative.

- The government and opposition groups need to return to the negotiation table in an open and inclusive process, stipulating a new path. This dialogue should not stop once a paper is signed, but continue until all root causes have been addressed.

Transitional Authority of Technocrats

An end to the violence through a political process seems no longer sufficient. Considering the distrust and cooperation problems under the Transitional Government of National Unity, an alternative interim governance structure is required to reach the scenario United in diversity. A neutral, non-partisan and independent South Sudanese Transitional Authority of Technocrats should be designed for a transitional period of at least three years until a new elected government is in place. It should consist of highly respected South Sudanese men and women, selected through a transparent process based on merit, and its aim should be to lead the country through the transition and national dialogue processes.

- As part of the above political process, the government and opposition groups, supported by the AU and UN, need to design a Transitional Authority of Technocrats to lead South Sudan on entry into force of any follow-up agreement to the ACRSS. Such a transitional authority should consist of the most capable and reliable of South Sudanese technocrats.
- The government and opposition groups should make the transitional authority responsible for: (1) Enabling the overhaul of public services and security sector reform; (2) Holding a consultative process on the permanent constitution; (3) Creating an environment that is conducive to a sincere national dialogue; and (4) Preparing free and credible elections. This should be done through broad-based consultations with citizens, in a transparent and accountable manner.
- The government and opposition groups need to return to our people their right to be consulted on the new permanent constitution and to vote through an election process stipulated for in ARCSS.

II. Transition to peace through dialogue

Create civic and political space

In order for such a Transitional Authority of Technocrats to do its job better and to create an environment that is conducive to a sincere national dialogue, the current trend towards the worst scenarios – in which civic and political space is shrinking and South Sudanese citizens are afraid to speak their minds – needs to be reversed. Under current conditions, no sincere, open and serious national dialogue can be held in a free and fair manner, and this is hampering a sustainable resolution of the conflicts. Only by open and honest debate about the past and the future of South Sudan – as in the scenario United in diversity – can sustainable peace be attained.

- The government needs to respect the bill of rights, which underscores, but is not limited to, freedom of expression and media, freedom of assembly and association, and freedom of movement and residence.

- The government and opposition groups, without delay and prejudice, need to unconditionally end the climate of fear created by their use of violence, release political prisoners, and adhere to the laws that govern South Sudan's security sector.

National dialogue

In order to forge a way forward towards the scenario United in diversity, a broad-based national dialogue is required. It needs to be an inclusive and impartial process that will allow South Sudan's diverse voices to be heard, and should articulate the 'South Sudan we want'. The aims of the process should be to record past events, include multiple narratives, and build a national social fabric. It should also collect broader input from the population on such issues as a national identity, the governance system, natural resources management, economic development, internal boundaries, education, transitional justice, and the electoral system. Such a process can provide input for a permanent constitution that has broad support from the South Sudanese population.

- The current national dialogue should be transformed into a broad-based and independent process. This dialogue should be inclusive, open, transparent and credible. It should be a long-term process, allowing time for a friendly relationship to develop among different actors, and carried out in various phases. All proceedings need to be recorded and made publicly available.

Space for local peacebuilding

While political dialogue at the national level is of utmost importance, there are many tensions and conflicts at the local level that also need to be addressed. Each has its own dynamics, but these local-level conflicts have increasingly become intertwined with the national-level conflict. Not addressing them would undermine all other processes. To ensure that any national-level peace process is grounded in the grassroots of society, local-level peacebuilding initiatives are of utmost importance.

- The government and opposition groups should allow for, give space to and support local-level peacebuilding initiatives.

III. Support the population through international assistance

Intensify humanitarian assistance

A combination of the conflict, collapsing economy and drought, among other factors, has led to famine and a humanitarian disaster. Even if the above actions are taken, South Sudan will require humanitarian assistance. If the country heads further in the direction of the scenarios Fragmentation, Dictatorship and 21 Kingdoms, the importance of humanitarian assistance will increase.

- The government and opposition groups need to ensure security and provide all required support and freedom of movement for humanitarian actors.

Allow UNMISS to operate

Currently, the UN peacekeeping operation (UNMISS) and the Regional Protection Force are not able to provide sufficient security to the South Sudanese population because their freedom of movement is restricted by the different parties.

- The government and opposition groups need to provide UNMISS with all required support and freedom of movement.

The POC sites

In mid-2017, there were 220,000 South Sudanese civilians hosted in UNMISS POC sites. As South Sudan is increasingly heading towards the scenarios Fragmentation, Dictatorship and 21 Kingdoms, the POC sites are likely to remain flash points for future escalations of the conflict.

- The government and opposition groups are first and foremost responsible for the protection of civilians in the areas under their control. They therefore need to take that responsibility seriously, end their threats against civilians and create an environment conducive to return.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AND CIVIL SOCIETY

Currently, in part due to different perspectives within the international community and the lack of a united effort, little progress has been made towards a more positive scenario. Since the ARCSS implementation period ends in August 2018, there is not enough time to realise important reforms. As the ARCSS takes precedence over the Transitional Constitution, and given the limited time left, there is a question as to what constitution the country will be governed under from August 2018 onwards.⁴² Discord among members of the international community and South Sudanese civil society and the mixed messages the first send – acknowledging the intense human suffering while giving band aid solutions that prolong the status quo – are undermining the little influence they have.

I. End the violence through a political process

End the war

It will be difficult for the South Sudanese parties to end the war if they are not supported by external actors.

- Neighbouring countries and other bilateral and multilateral actors need to abstain completely from supporting parties to continue the violent conflict and collaborate fully in the safeguarding of the cessation of hostilities and complete implementation of a political agreement.

Renew the political process

The IGAD has lost much of its credibility to lead the political process, due to elite-level involvement and the self-serving interests of many of South Sudan's neighbouring countries that form the bulk of the organisation's membership. Even the High-Level Revitalisation Forum will not circumvent these concerns.⁴³ A new approach is required, led by a new and impartial mediator.

42 ARCSS Chapter VIII (2) "This Agreement shall be fully incorporated into the Transitional Constitution of South Sudan, 2011 (TCRSS) ...Notwithstanding this process of incorporation, in the event that the provisions of the TCRSS conflicts with the terms of this Agreement, the terms of this Agreement shall prevail. (3) This Agreement shall take precedence over any national legislation, and in the event that the provisions of a national legislation conflict with the terms of this Agreement, this Agreement shall prevail."

43 IGAD, Communiqué of the 31st Extra-ordinary Summit of IGAD Assembly of Heads of State and Government on South Sudan, 12 June 2017, Addis Ababa.

- The AU needs to take over the lead from IGAD as a new and impartial mediator in the political process. It will have to continue to play this role after the cessation of hostilities, while the ARCSS is being updated and during implementation. A mediation process does not stop when an agreement is signed; there needs to be continuous independent and collaborative mediation throughout the whole transitional period.
- South Sudan's religious institutions need to assist the AU in bringing different government and opposition parties together (in preparation meetings or 'neutral forums', with different levels of governance and military authority) in order to build trust and a more intimate setting for dialogue, with a focus on what the people need. Such pre-work will also reduce the number of seats required at the negotiating table.
- The UN, IGAD, Troika (USA, UK, Norway), EU and other partners need to develop a long-term multilateral strategy to support the AU-led political mediation process, both in terms of finance and logistics.

Support to Transitional Authority of Technocrats

The Transitional Authority of Technocrats will face a daunting task and will require all the support it can get.

- The international community (AU, UN, IGAD, Troika and EU) should support the Transitional Authority of Technocrats in its task of leading South Sudan upon entry into force of any follow-up agreement to the ACRSS. This support will have to include technical know-how, funding, monitoring and ensuring transparency.

II. Transition to peace through dialogue

Create civic and political space

Sincere, open and serious national dialogue held in a free and fair manner is required – as in the scenario United in diversity – to reach sustainable peace.

- *The international community* should support and monitor the creation of civic and political space to allow such a real national dialogue to take place. It should monitor the extent to which South Sudanese parties are respecting the bill of rights and adhering to the laws that govern the country's security sector, and whether political prisoners are released.

Support a national dialogue

A broad-based national dialogue is required to support the political dialogue and give the scenario United in diversity a chance. This process should have a long-term focus, guarantee the inclusion of multiple narratives, and build a national social fabric.

- The international community should support the independence, inclusion, openness, transparency and credibility of the national dialogue process. Its assistance should consist of independent expertise to those leading the national dialogue, monitoring progress, funding, and transparent reporting on the process.

- Religious institutions, with impartial technical support, need to take a lead in this national dialogue, while the Transitional Authority of Technocrats should create an environment that is conducive to open and honest debate.

Invest in local initiatives of reconciliation, healing and peacebuilding

To prevent and resolve local conflicts, stop them worsening as a result of the national conflict, and ensure that any national-level peace process is grounded in the grassroots of South Sudan's society, local-level peacebuilding initiatives are of utmost importance.

- Grassroots civil society groups and religious institutions need to focus on local peacebuilding initiatives and stay engaged for the long term.
- Donors need to assist, facilitate and build the capacity of neutral grassroots civil society groups and religious institutions dealing with local peacebuilding initiatives. For example, the Action Plan for Peace of the South Sudan Council of Churches⁴⁴ needs to be strengthened so that local inter-church committees, together with other community-based actors, can act as ever-present local peace brokers and keepers.

III. Support the population through international assistance

Intensify humanitarian assistance

The importance of, especially locally-led, humanitarian assistance will increase, particularly if the country is heading further in the direction of the scenarios Fragmentation, Dictatorship and 21 Kingdoms.

- Humanitarian agencies and organisations need to prepare for a further deterioration of the humanitarian situation. Programming should be focused on activities carried out through local humanitarian agencies, which will strengthen local markets and build on existing protection capacities. Timely prepositioning ahead of the rainy season will be important.

Embolden UNMISS

Currently, UNMISS and the Regional Protection Force lack the required capabilities and take a force posture that is too weak. Despite the difficult environment and lack of progress in the political process, considering a drawdown of UNMISS at a time when large numbers of the South Sudanese population are under imminent threat is not appropriate.

- UNMISS needs to actively monitor and enforce the cessation of hostilities and protect civilians throughout the country, not just in the POC sites.
- UNMISS troop-contributing countries need to embolden their force posture, carry out patrols, respond more actively, and be more visible outside their camps.

⁴⁴ The Action Plan for Peace strengthens and builds on the network of Inter-Church Councils in the entire country, with the aim to end the violence, hold impartial dialogues between conflict parties, and bring about reconciliation among the broader population.

- The UN Security Council needs to redouble its commitment to the South Sudanese population and to UNMISS, and strengthen its political support for the implementation of the UNMISS mandate.

Humanise the POC sites

The POC sites originated as an emergency response in 2013 when civilians under imminent threat sought refuge at UNMISS camps. Over the past four years, these sites have become semi-permanent camps for civilians whose lives are threatened outside the camps. Inside the camps, living conditions are below SPHERE standards – the minimum standards for humanitarian assistance. The sites have never been upgraded to IDP camp standards due to their temporary nature.⁴⁵ Moreover, the POC sites are likely to remain flash points for future escalations of the conflict.

- UN agencies need to improve living conditions in the POC sites, including through better provision of humanitarian assistance.
- UNMISS needs to further upgrade its protection capability and contingency planning for the POC sites. For example, in a worsening food situation, the POC sites are likely to attract more displaced people as they become the only source of food. In the absence of a viable exit strategy, voluntary relocation of people in the POC sites to IDP or refugee camps should be considered.

⁴⁵ Andre Heller Perache, Samuel Carpenter and Lucie Lecarpentier, 'Opinion and debate: If basic life support is a pull-factor, let them come', Médecins Sans Frontières, 12 December 2016, <<https://www.msf4me.org/node/1533/%7B%7Bsnetwork.link%7D%7D>>; Caelin Briggs and Lisa Monaghan, *Protection of civilians sites: Lessons from South Sudan for future operations*, Norwegian Refugee Council, 31 May 2017.

