

United Nations Human Rights Council
Universal Periodic Review of Member- The Republic of South Sudan

A. Governmental Operations

1. In April 2010, elections were held to determine the President of the autonomous Government of South Sudan by the process of direct popular vote. Salva Kiir of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) received 92.99% of the votes and assumed his role of President of South Sudan on July 9, 2011, the day of its independence. While the elections are believed to be fair, some South Sudanese citizens believe that in order for Salva Kiir to have been democratically elected, an election would have needed to be conducted after South Sudan's independence.
2. South Sudan has yet to hold an election since its independence. Elections that were scheduled to occur in 2015 were postponed until 2018 by South Sudan's cabinet due to the ongoing conflict within the country. The decision to postpone the elections extended Salva Kiir's term in office for an additional two years.
3. While in office, Salva Kiir has attempted to represent the different ethnic groups within South Sudan in the government. Salva Kiir, who belongs to the majority ethnic group, the Dinka, initially selected Riek Machar of the second largest ethnic group, the Nuer, as his First Vice President. We commend South Sudan on their efforts to establish a government that is representative of the many different people groups in South Sudan.
4. However, conflict that erupted in 2013 originated from tensions between President Salva Kiir and Vice President Riek Machar. President Salva Kiir accused Vice President Riek Machar of instigating a coup. While the conflict is not an ethnic conflict at its core, many Dinka have supported President Salva Kiir and many Nuer have supported Vice President Riek Machar, ultimately causing the conflict to appear to be between the two groups. Reports have indicated though, there are members of each ethnic group supporting the opposite party. It is important to recognize the conflict as a political conflict and not an ethnic conflict, while at the same time acknowledging the tribalism that persists in South Sudan.
5. There is a concern about corruption within the government. Vice President Riek Machar, who has been leading the opposition in the conflict, has been linked to aiding the Lord's Resistance Army. This is a concerning matter as South Sudan attempts to resolve the conflict and stabilize the government. Also, in 2012, it was made public by President Salva Kiir that \$4 billion was unaccounted for due to government officials taking the money and depositing it in foreign banks; he demanded officials within South Sudan's government to return the stolen funds.

6. There are also concerns that both sides of the conflict have committed arbitrary or unlawful killings. The conflict has undoubtedly flared ethnic tensions and many reports have indicated unlawful killings between ethnic groups. Findings have also indicated that both sides of the conflict are recruiting child soldiers.

B. Tribalism

7. Tribalism remains as a key role in the instability of South Sudan. Following independence, South Sudan failed to create unity among the tribes, instead elevating tribal identities rather than an identity of a South Sudanese citizen. Reports have indicated where tribalism plays a role in some employment; individuals were required to identify which tribe they belonged to on top of their application.
8. In general, tribes still have a mentality of “born-to-rule”. This causes issues surrounding politics because it causes conflict among tribes that believe they are better, or better fit to rule, than the rest. There are difficulties in trying to promote power sharing because of the inherit belief that each tribe holds that there can only be one great tribe and the rest are subjugated to its ruling. The mentality of tribalism can be understood as rule or be ruled.
9. There had been genocidal remarks made by the Nuer Youth White Army in 2011 vowing to “wipe out the entire Murle tribe on the face of the earth.” Most of the violence has been among the Nuer, Dinka, and Murle tribes, and has been responsible for claiming thousands of lives.
10. NGO’s and religious groups continue to implement programs within the country to dismantle tribalism and encourage unity and reconciliation. These programs are in need of support by the government of South Sudan and United Nations. Ending tribalism is crucial to South Sudan’s future success.

C. Religious Freedom

11. Religious freedom has been enjoyed in South Sudan since its independence. The Constitution calls for separation of religion and State and allows for equal treatment and respect of religions.
12. Approximately sixty percent of the nation claim to adhere to Christianity, while the rest follow Islam and animist religions. There have not been any reports of conflict due to religion.
13. Threats to religious freedom are suspected to come from extremists from the Republic of the Sudan. In January 2015 a church was burned down in Yida. Those arrested were

Sudanese citizens who claimed they were sent to South Sudan in order to target churches and NGO's providing aid.

D. Development

14. Conflict has halted the development of South Sudan in terms of food security and education. Education in South Sudan remains one of the worst in the world, especially for women and girls. Approximately one-fourth of the population is literate, but a major disparity exists between men and women. Roughly forty percent of men are literate while only about fifteen percent of women are literate.
15. There is a huge issue of a lack of teachers, while many of the teachers never completed primary school themselves. Because the government's education budget is so low, teachers rely on parents for their pay. Unfortunately, this is not nearly enough as most South Sudanese live off of well under two dollars a day.
16. A UNICEF report indicated that seventy percent of the children have never stepped foot in a school. Conflict worsens this reality as it is often too dangerous to attend or the school has been destroyed. Another critical factor is that some children have been recruited to engage in the conflict as soldiers, depriving them of their opportunity for an education.
17. Tensions with the Republic of the Sudan and ongoing conflict has also caused South Sudan's oil production to decrease. Oil is essential to South Sudan's economy and development. The reduction has further caused the citizens of South Sudan to rely on foreign assistance.
18. Conflict has also worsened food insecurity in the country. Conflict has prevented farmers from planting and harvesting crops due to destroyed land and displacement. Approximately one-fourth of children under the age of five are underweight.

E. Recommendations

19. In order to move forward with the development and stability of South Sudan, it is critical for an investigation to be conducted on both President Salva Kiir and Vice President Riek Machar and their followers. There are allegations that both sides have recruited child soldiers and are responsible for unlawful and arbitrary killings. Corruption within the government is also a fear, as government officials have stolen money in the past, and there have been former connections with dangerous organizations. The South Sudanese people need to be ensured that their government is trustworthy and has the South Sudanese citizens' best interest in mind.

20. Initiatives need to be made to end the conflict and pursue reconciliation. We are discouraged that the peace agreements have been unsuccessful so far. Peace talks need to be encouraged and supported by the international community.
21. Tribalism needs to be addressed in South Sudan. Tribalism has led to more conflict and strife within the country, and has fueled disunity. Although tribal identity is important, in order for South Sudan to move forward in peace, tribal identities need to come second to being a citizen of South Sudan. Language in the Constitution should be changed to promote this idea. Many organizations and churches have reconciliation programs within communities to aid the issue of tribalism. Programs such as these should be encouraged and supported.
22. South Sudan should be commended for the steps it has taken in religious liberty and other states should look to it as an example. As a young nation South Sudan has ensured that each religion is treated equally and fairly, and has separated the government from the affairs of religion.
23. Development remains perhaps the most crucial aspect in South Sudan. The young nation is essentially failing, mainly due to the ongoing conflict. We further stress that peace negotiations need to be made, as killings continue and the food insecurity worsens. It is an extremely dire state for the children especially, who have limited access to education and are threatened by malnutrition. If South Sudan is to succeed as a state, it is critical that it receives more humanitarian assistance, especially in terms of food and educational training.