

RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Rethinking Post-Conflict States in Africa: Perspective on Armed Conflicts and Peace Agreements in South Sudan (2026 – 2020)

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## Abstract

The overall objective of this study is to investigate armed conflicts and peace process in South Sudan and how this peace process shaped the political structure of South Sudanese state. Precisely, this study aims to survey the provocations facing the peace agreements - R-ARCSS in South Sudan, exploring the factors behind armed conflicts in South Sudan, and how best this study would draw a remedy for resolving armed conflicts in South Sudan. This study employed a bi-model method of sampling design vested on the simple random sampling and purposive sampling design in the process of collecting data. The study unit of analysis is based on the researchers prior experience and from the primary and secondary sources of data. This way, 100 self-administered questionnaires were distributed and the response rate was 81. 81% rate of return of the total questionnaire is suitable for drawing a scientific conclusion. This study had also employed both the qualitative and quantitative form of data analysis, where the former had been attributed to the thorough review of the responses obtained from the administered questionnaires through a documentation process given the themes provided whilst the later was presented on a descriptive form of statistics meant through the frequency distribution tables with the help of Statistical Packages of Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 21. The study found that, security sector reform had remained to be the hindrance behind the implementation of the revitalized peace agreement in South Sudan and that issues such as the power struggle, militarization of politics and politicization of military, proliferation of the small arms and historical legacies played a significant role in engendering and sustaining armed conflicts in post-independent South Sudan. While the study concludes that the parties to the conflicts should to urgently implement R-ARCSS in totality, the study also recommends: demonstration of political will by the stakeholders to the revitalized peace agreements to implement the agreement in later and spirit; funding of the security sector in order to realize the graduation of the unified forces on the ground, the conduct of the timely election that reflects the will of the people and the clear-cut fission between politics and military to save country from falling back in the trap of armed conflicts and stuck transitions.

**Keywords:** Rethinking, Post, Conflict, States, Africa, Perspective, Armed, Peace Agreements, South Sudan.

## 1. Introduction

(Demostenis Yagcioglu, 1996) as cited in Aziza Dessalegn (2017) argued conflict as an expected incidence in the very existence of mankind starting from individual 's interaction with their environment to their interaction at the international level. More

often than not a good number conflict shares a similar feature and dynamics in a sense that most conflicts are fought for the reason of fulfilling the unmet interest and values of two opposing sides over specific matter. Post-cold war hopes of a world without wars, where conflicts between and within nations are peacefully

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resolved through negotiations, have not been fully realized. Recent data on armed conflicts indicated that during the period 1989 – 1990, there were 103 such conflicts in 69 locations around the world, 33 of which were active in 1997 (Ayer, 2000). Over the decade, roughly one third of all the United Nations Member states were directly involved in at least one armed conflict (Ibid.). The number of conflicts increased after the end of cold war, peaking in 1992, most were contained by the end of 1997, and there were 27 conflicts in 1998 and 36 in 1999 (Ibid.).

During the decade of 1989-1997, there was only one major armed conflict between states. This pronounced change in pattern-to intra-state conflict-suggest a new phase in world security, in which many states are finding it difficult to provide peaceful and effective solutions when faced with intricate and intractable conflicts within their borders (Ibid.). An armed conflict often involves a group of people who are armed and ready to fight for the goal of seizing governmental power. Sometimes conflicts are matters of organized crime as opposed to politics. Money is the motivator for these groups. Unlike members of secessionist movements, such groups are generally prepared to continue to live in the same territory with other groups, regardless of the outcome of the conflict (Ibid:).

It has been evidential that armed conflicts involved different actors such as Para-militias, organize forces and armed civilians with slight castigation and porous line of responsibility. Such clans took a revolutionary fight with no accepted principles of war. Such encounters always bring about into the ruin of the state's institutions leading to paralysis of supremacy, a breakdown of the law and order, and general lawlessness and turmoil (Ibid.). According to Sivard Leger (1996), civilians represented 50% of war related deaths, in the first half of the twentieth century. In the 1960's civilians accounted for 63% of war recorded deaths, in the 1980's 74% and in the 1990's the number went upper. The massive killing of civilian populations is due, in large part, to the fact that present day wars are fought within and not between countries where villages and streets have become battlefields, traditional sanctuaries, such as hospitals and churches and schools have become targets (Sivard, 1996).

Civilian involvement in the armed conflicts due to easy availability of small arms and light weapons, which are also inexpensive, reliable and simple to operate, and hence, since the end of cold war, arms

manufacturers have been aggressively promoting sales to developing countries to compensate for the fall in arms purchases by most industrialized countries (Ibid.). The average length of the armed conflicts currently underway in early 2015 is 15.8% years [sic] reflecting the states that have suffered from the previous cycles of violence such as Israel-Palestine, Iraq, Thailand, Afghanistan and South Sudan (Fisas, 2015). Hence, armed conflict may end in many ways, including through peace agreements entered into by the warring parties to explicitly regulate or resolve contentious issues. They may also end through outright victory, where one party has been defeated and or eliminated by the other (Ayers, 2000).

### 1.1 Background of the Study

In post-conflicts states, it has been propounded that any peace agreement should have a timeline for the implementation of various process as this safeguard facilitating, pressuring and encouraging all the parties involved in ending conflicts (Manney et. al, 2006). As this would let differences between the parties involved to the agreement to be resolved amicably without the unabridged peace agreement flop and returning to conflicts (Joshi et. al, 2016). The peace process in Northern Ireland is a living example of ending conflict through compromised agreement, though involving little grassroots initiative to rebuild the society (Knobel, 2011).

In Africa, efforts in achieving peace have highlighted the inability of the international community. For Somalia, since the beginning of the armed conflict in 1990's, their exist several attempts been put forward such as peace conferences in Djibouti 1991, Addis Ababa 1993, and Cairo 1997, by the international community as a supporting mechanisms to help diffuse and solve the conflicts (Osman, 2007). However, never sufficiently addressed the real grievance that exists among Somali individuals and clans followed by continuous ceasefire violations leaves peace processes hostage to armed factions (Barris and Elmi, 2006; Marangio, 2012). On the context analysis of South Sudan, during the course of 2013, stability and rapid development in the second half of the year, the country was thrown back into an armed conflict that flared up in December 15<sup>th</sup> (UCDP, 2014). But the hopes for a peaceful transition from civil war towards a functioning and stable state were high, while the situation was still improving to be unstable (Stolpe, 2015). Due to continuous death of hundreds and the displacement of nearly one million people, internally and externally rising challenges of state building in

post conflict contexts and the difficulties in dealing with deeper divisions and historical structural blunder lines (Kisiangani, 2015). And yet, the South Sudanese leadership remains highly uncommitted to the peace implementation process (Liaga, 2017).

## 1.2 Statement of Research Problem

The Sudanese government in Khartoum and the rebel movement, Sudan People Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) signed a peace agreement ‘Comprehensive Peace Agreement’ (CPA) in 2005, to end Africa’s longest-running civil war which paved the way for southern referendum on independence, after which South Sudan, led by the SPLM party, seceded on July 9<sup>th</sup>, 2011 (Blanchurt, 2013). South Sudan post-independence era was heavily characterized by political instability where in December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2013 it slid back to armed conflict when the power struggle within the SPLM party turned violent with President Kiir accusing his former [then] deputy Dr. Riek Machar of an attempt to overthrow government illegally, an indictment that Machar denied (Bridled and Arensen, 2014).

The situation culminated in to the intractable conflict resulted to the loss of thousands of human lives with more than 1.6 million people displaced from their respective homes out of which 1.3 million internally and 615,000 have fled to the neighboring countries and almost 100,000 citizens are seeking refuge in United Nations bases in the country (International Crisis Group, 2014, Accessed on 7<sup>th</sup>, June, 2021).

The International Community through Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) broke an accord namely the agreement on the resolution of conflicts in the Republic of South Sudan (ARCSS) signed in Ethiopian Capital Addis Ababa and Juba in August 2015 respectively meant to end almost three years of armed conflict (Laer et. al, 2018). The signing of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of Conflicts in South Sudan (RARCSS) by the longtime rivals Salva Kiir and Riek Machar and other oppositions groups in Khartoum in September 2018 were hailed as a breakthrough for reversing the brutal civil conflict that has devastated the country’s economy and socio-political status (Ryan, 2019, Accessed on 6<sup>th</sup>, June, 2021). It was an expectation that, the aforementioned peace efforts as fair and genuine deal to end the armed conflicts, it wasn’t succeed due to the attitudes of the leaders who are signatory to the agreement mainly from the government who insist on having reservations and further, lack of follow-up by the regional and international actors, detention

of Riek Machar in South Africa [then] as evidence of IGAD’s bias towards the government and lack of pressure exerted on the parties to execute the accord correctly (Laer et. al, 2018).

The incapability of government to disarm, accommodate, train or integrate various forces on time as per the peace matrix have crippled the smooth formation and implementation of the revitalized transitional government of national unity (R-TGoNU) despite a May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2019 deadline as per September 2018 revitalized peace agreement and thus, lowered citizen’s confidence on the peace process (Al Jazeera News, 2019, Accessed on 5<sup>th</sup>, June, 2021). As Aghebo (2013), argued that, poorly implemented disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) program by the government would reinforced insecurity in the everyday lives of citizens (Aghebo, 2013). Several attempts of peaceful conflict resolution in South Sudan were resisted and took the back seat with the acquisition of new arms where those seeking outright military resolution on the battle field became emboldened that boosted air and riverine capacity of the army made the pursuit of military objectives more appealing to the total exclusion of other alternative or parallel avenues (Blackings, 2018). Although the R-ARCISS addresses a broad range of issues and represents many stakeholders both unarmed and armed, its shortcomings have prevented some actors from signing the agreement, such as the holdout groups in Rome peace talks (Adeba, 2019).

As studies by Blackings (2018), concluded that, South Sudan peace deals continue to suffer and thus, need strategic response and intervention plans to ensure stability otherwise there would be an intensification of additional suffering and misery for the people of South Sudan who have not gained much from the peace agreements (Blackings, 2018). A further study by Adeba (2019), also revealed that, there is a need to strengthen the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCISS) to ensure that, peace and stability reigns due to the fact that, many facets of the R-ARCISS are well conceived and sound in theory with some existing problematic issues that could hinder its effectiveness and ability to prevent a return to hostilities (Adeba, 2019). The slow start in the execution of the R-ARCSS given the various challenges encountered in terms of slow dissemination resulted in to the trust deficit between the parties to the peace accord and creates capacity gap within the various security mechanisms necessary prior to the formation of the R-TGoNU.

(HRC, 2021) observed that, persistent political impressing, differences, doubt and distrust among the main parties, resulted in unnecessary delays in the accomplishment of crucial phases in the implementation of governance, political, social, economic, security and justice elements of the R-ARCSS envisioned to “reinstate lasting and sustainable peace, security and stability”. For this reason, this study attempt to fill the above missing link through scrutinizing the obstructing factors to the current ongoing peace efforts (implementation) in South Sudan, given the supporting landmark events fueling armed conflicts and how best political stability could be restored back through R-ARCISS given a justifiable period of 2016 – 2020.

### 1.3 Broad Objective of the Study

The central objective of this study is to examine armed conflict and the peace process in South Sudan given a justifiable period of 2016 – 2020 and how this peace process shaped the political structure of South Sudan.

#### 1.3.1 Specific Objectives of the Study

- i. To identify challenges facing implementation of Revitalized-Agreement on Resolution of Conflicts in South Sudan.
- ii. To understand factors underpinning armed conflicts in South Sudan.
- iii. To explore appropriate mechanisms for resolving armed conflicts peacefully in South Sudan.

#### 1.3.2 Research Questions

This study attempts to answer the following questions

- i. What are the challenges facing implementation of Revitalized-Agreement on Resolution of Conflicts in South Sudan?
- ii. What are the factors underpinning armed conflicts in South Sudan.?
- iii. How best armed conflicts can be resolved peacefully in South Sudan?

### 1.4 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study were of great value with strong policy implications for the policy makers in South Sudan more especially the parties to the Revitalized Agreement on Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan, mainly intends to bring some policy reforms in the institutions of governance concerned in implementing and monitoring the revitalized peace

agreement efficiently and effectively as an essential means of bringing armed conflicts down in South Sudan.

This research may be of importance to academicians for future research replication in South Sudan that might have shown an interest in creative and critical exploration of same problem under the study i.e. the study is expected to contribute to the existing literature about peace agreement and the effect it causes to the armed conflict as a whole.

### 1.5 Scope, Delimitation and Limitation of the Study

This study aimed at assessing the models of conflict resolution on the basis of peace agreements in regards to the nature of armed conflicts in South Sudan given a justifiable period of 2016 – 2020. This period was chosen on the rationalization that, it is the period that South Sudan peace agreements in general and specifically, Revitalized-Agreement on the Resolution of Conflicts in South Sudan (R-ARCISS) signed in 2018 had witnessed a drawback on its strength to cease armed conflicts. This would have been a large-scale study that needs some parts of South Sudan to be included, but due to the short period of time in which this study has to be conducted, the study was conducted in Juba due to its suitability of been the center of genesis of the conflict where people with different background were availed given the accessibility to relevant institutions pertaining to the study, and thus, influenced the nature of the data collected positively.

The research was limited to the above mentioned sites due to financial and time constraints that would not allow large scale studies under such short period of time and financial deficit. Procurement of resources for large scale studies and facilitation of movement are too cost given the hard economic situation in the country. The whole process of carrying out the study from data collection to the analysis and interpretation of data were tedious, time consuming and tiresome.

### 1.6 Operational Definitions of Key Concepts

#### 1.6.1 Peace Agreement

(Jumoke Adegbonmire, 2015) defines peace agreement as a formal process between warring parties, which addresses the disputed incompatibility, either by settling all or part of it, or by clearly outlining a process for how the warring parties plan to regulate the incompatibility. Though, this definition has captured the relevant gist of peace agreement yet,

it had not succinctly satisfied this study due to the fact that, it had ignored how it is communicated to the consumers. For this reason, this study adopted a definition by Bell and Fulscher (2016), cemented on the basis that, peace agreement is publicly engineered for easy popular consumption. Peace Agreements are the formal documents that are publicly produced after discussion with all (or some of) the conflict's protagonists. They reflect a degree of agreement between those actors, primarily regarding the need to address and end physical violence (Bell and Fulscher, 2016).

### **1.6.2 Armed Conflict**

Uppsala Conflict Data Program (1975) as cited in Harbom et. al. (2006, P: 626) defined armed conflict as a contested incompatibility that concerns government or territory or both where the use of armed force between two parties results in at least 25 battle related deaths in a year, where of these two parties one has to be the government of a state. Nonetheless, this definition is broad in the context of South Sudan yet, it had a tiny significant in this study due to its slender scope of related death.

For this reason, this study applied the below definition due to its wider scope of related death, as it is based on the justification that, armed conflict in South Sudan had claimed thousands of lives in the due course of the conflict. Armed Conflict is a political conflict within a state in which armed fighting or clashes between government forces and its opponents result in at least 1,000 deaths in the course of the conflict (Wallenstein and Sollenberg, 1998).

### **1.6.3 Conflict Resolution**

(Miller, 2003) defined conflict resolution as “a variety of approaches aimed at terminating conflicts through the constructive solving of problems, distinct from management or transformation of conflict”. Though, the above definition had an acute meaning in South Sudan model of resolving conflict, yet it is too wanting due to the fact that, it had ignored realistic parties to the conflict and hence, it is linear and descriptive in the context analysis of South Sudan. For this reason, this study adopted a working definition below as it had captured an essential mode of resolving conflict, that pre-determine the future of the conflict given the nature of peace accord meant to end the armed conflict.

(Mitchel and Banks, 1996) conflict resolution refers to an outcome in which the issues in an existing conflict are satisfactorily dealt with through solution that is

mutually acceptable to the parties, self-sustaining in the long run and productive of a new, positive relationship between parties that were previously hostile adversaries; and process or procedure by which such an outcome is achieved.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Challenges Facing Implementation of R-ARCISS**

#### **2.1.1 Lack of Political will**

De Vries and Schomerus (2017) explained that, the collapsed of the 2015 Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan signed by the South Sudanese government, the International Community and members of the opposition was a result of lack of political will by the government and the opposition, both of whom had more interest in the amount of power they would retain than in implementing the agreement. The Revitalized Government has persistently failed to provide strong leadership and a clear road map for the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement, and instead continues to operate in an ad hoc manner, disregarding agreed timelines and impeding the realization of key measures required to move South Sudan towards stability (NHRC, 2021). The revitalized agreement on the resolution of conflicts in South Sudan is a typical power sharing model, rooted both in democratic and conflict management ways; aimed at ending the armed conflict in South Sudan and real security dilemmas faced by both parties to the conflict (Awolich, 2019). But the implementation of R-ARCISS has been moving on slow speed with no meaningful progress is achieved in regards to its implementation of the core issues (Ibid). Without a legislature, laws have not been passed to establish the commission for truth, reconciliation and healing, the hybrid court for South Sudan and the compensation and reparation authority and fund to address the legacy of conflict-related human rights violations and atrocity crimes, thus suspending the transitional justice response, and with it the prospects for healing, reconciliation and social recovery for South Sudan (HRC, 2021). The excessive attention given to the government and the opposition in the conflict has overshadowed genuine grievances that ordinary citizens of the country are facing and that can motivate them to take up arms and fight (Nyadera, 2019). This is further worsening by the perception that rebels are illegitimate groups challenging the sovereignty of the country and the opposition far-fetched claimed that they represent the real grievances of the citizens (Ibid.).

As FIDH (2014) noted, most of the agreements signed between GRSS and SPLM/A-IO have proven to lingering only on paper, both parties having so far botched to implement their provisions. Between the January 23<sup>rd</sup> Agreement (Cessation of Hostilities) and the end of October 2014, both parties have regularly violated their cessation of hostilities commitment and have been responsible for the perpetration of human rights contravention against civilians. Fundamental to these symptomatic challenges is the deep-seated mistrust between the political leaders, the lack of political will to institute reform, endemic corruption, violence and the ethnic and transactional politics that have beset South Sudan since the outbreak of war in December 2013. The political elite has manipulated and exploited social and ethnic tensions for its own narrow gains and trapped the majority in a perpetual state of poverty, neglect and conflict (Mahasa, 2020).

Where (HRC, 2021) observed that, persistent political grandstanding, disagreement, suspicion and distrust among the main parties, however, resulted in undue delays in the achievement of key stages in the implementation of governance, political, social, economic, security and justice elements of the Revitalized Agreement intended to “restore permanent and sustainable peace, security and stability” in South Sudan. Hence, lack of political will by the leadership to implement the revitalized peace agreements is not an end in itself but it is a function of state recalcitrant institutions to check on the implementation matrix given the obstructing roles of the hold out groups in executing the 2018 peace accord in latter and spirit.

## 2.2 Security Sector

Joshi et al. (2015) found that, implementing security sector reforms contributes to longterm conflict reduction not only between the parties to the accord but also between the government and other non-signatory groups in the same conflict. Related to this, Hartzell et al. (2001) stress the importance of third party enforcement of peace agreements and Kreutz (2010) finds that the deployment of peacekeepers reduces the risk of war recurrence, while Quinn et al. (2007) find that peace settlements only statistically significantly reduce the risk of war recurrence when they are guaranteed by peacekeeping forces.

The role of security guarantees in peace agreements has also been highlighted by Fortna (2007) who finds that, the putting in place of demilitarized zones, security guarantees from third parties and the presence of peace keeping troops all make peace more likely to last

longer. In line with these results, also Matanock (2017) finds that peace agreements ensuring participation of both government and opposition/rebel parties and using outside actors as monitors and enforcers are pillars of stability and enduring peace. According to the South Sudanese authorities, the country’s military forces currently have approximately 350,000 troops. Since independence, the security sector has been at the centre of the state apparatus and has consumed the bulk of the country’s resources and official budget; in the 2019/2020 budget, 13 per cent of government expenditure was earmarked for security, while critical services for the population received declining shares of the budget (UNDP, 2017).

Education was allocated 5.6 per cent, health care 1.1 per cent and rural development 0.7 per cent, representatives of think tanks and non-governmental organizations noted that, in reality, a much higher level of funds is spent on security than is captured in the official budget. The size of the security sector itself is a challenge, because the costs of maintaining the current military are unsustainable (Wells, 2017). Chapter II of the Revitalized Peace Agreement prohibits the recruitment and training of new forces by the signatories and outlines a process by which troops are to be assembled in cantonment sites within 30 days of the signing of the Agreement, screened for eligibility and demobilized or retrained as part of necessary unified forces within eight months (Vertin, 2018). Despite those provisions, the review team noted that parties to the conflict have continued to recruit new troops, with unrealistic promises of eventual incorporation into the formal security sector; those actions have included the forced recruitment of youths because the size of the military factions was not certified at the start, the security sector reform process thus far has exacerbated the problem of the oversized security apparatus (Ibid).

In violation of the Revitalized Peace Agreement, troops assembled in cantonment sites have not received adequate food, shelter and access to medical care. Conditions in cantonment sites and training centers are, reportedly, especially adverse for women. Most troops have never gone into cantonment sites, and of those that have, many abandoned the sites because of those conditions, stalling progress on security sector reform (Boswell, 2019). The South Sudanese authorities recognized that those troops who were moved from cantonment sites to training sites had not been properly vetted; more than two years after the signing of the Agreement, no unified forces have

been graduated or deployed. Officials of the South Sudanese Government attributed the delays to a lack of external funding for the security sector reform process and a lack of weapons for newly trained troops (Johnson, 2020).

Since the demobilization of the combatants and the reform of military, police and intelligence institutions directly affects the security of the signatories of a peace agreement and the state, these mechanisms are highly sensitive (UNDP, 2020). Political violence continued at similar level after the peace deal that allowed limited transitional security forces both from SPLA and SPLA-IO to take up position in Juba but, the city remains highly militarized and thus, as a violation of the principles of the peace deal (Bello-Shunemann, 2019). But the condition for a credible and neutral force from a third country to provide security in Juba was abandoned, possibly at the insistence of regional powers (Ibid.). The absence of coherent strategies and processes for security sector reform and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration in South Sudan is a significant driver of insecurity. Security forces, including new recruits, often go unpaid for months at a time and survive by looting the civilian population and extorting money at checkpoints; however, because of delays in implementing the commitments on security sector reform outlined in the Revitalized Peace Agreement and the failure of the Government to commit funds to that undertaking, donors lack confidence in the process and have been reluctant to provide funding (World Peace Foundation, 2018).

Another shortcoming in the security arrangements can be seen in the fact that the National Security Services (NSS) are not covered in the agreement. Over the course of the conflict, the NSS has become a dominant military actor in South Sudan, on similarity with the SSPDF itself, legislation enacted in 2014 expanded the NSS's powers beyond the information gathering role provided for in the Transitional Constitution to include a range of police powers, including the power to arrest, detain, conduct searches, and seize property (Williams, 2018). The National Constitutional Amendment Committee (NCAC), a body established under the RARCSS with a mandate to, among other things, review and amend relevant national security legislation, submitted amendments to the NSS Act to the Ministry of Justice in mid-2019, but the amended legislation has not yet been discussed in parliament or enacted into law. Another major security concern relates to the resurgence of violence between government and SPLM-IO forces, on the one hand, and non-signatory groups, on the other. The first

quarter of 2020 had offered some promise for the prospects of bringing the non-signatory groups into the fold (Deng, 2020).

On February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020, the parties to the R-ARCSS endorsed the Rome Declaration as mediated by the Community of Sant'Egidio and the ceasefire was largely holding through the end of March. The Joint Defense Board (JDB), a body comprising military leaders from the parties to the agreement, had also succeeded in negotiating a ceasefire with forces that had defected from the SPLM-IO in Maiwut and Adar but in April, the ceasefire broke down as fighting was reignited in and around Yei, displacing thousands of people (Ibid.). Toft (2009) argues that, security sector reform should be given a priority so to tackle the greed and fear of belligerent motivations; in other words, sustainable post-conflict peace remains elusive if ex-rebels are not properly reintegrated into their societies.

### 2.3 Number of States

The issue of the number of states and their boundaries in South Sudan has been a thorny one in the peace process ever since Kiir unilaterally increased the number of states in 2015. As a result, the R-ARCSS mandated the Technical Boundary Committee (TBC), a consensual body comprising experts from IGAD and Troika member states, with defining and demarcating South Sudan's tribal areas as they stood in January 1956 (Maphasa, 2020). The idea was that the work and report of the TBC would feed into the work of the Independent Boundaries Committee (IBC), a body tasked with determining the number of states in South Sudan. The IBC submitted a report on its work on 18 June 2019, yet the contentious issue of the number of states remained unresolved, as the report of the IBC was inconclusive on the issue and instead recommended a political solution to resolve the dispute (Ibid.).

The R-ARCSS provides for a referendum on the matter should the dispute over the number of states and the council of states not be resolved. This option is practically ambitious and riddled with inherent difficulties. Mediator initiatives by IGAD and South Africa's special envoy to South Sudan, Deputy President David Mabuza, to resolve this dispute also failed in persuading the parties to compromise (The Sudd Institute, 2019). The most immediate and practical challenge to the TBC is the feasibility of conducting all of its aforementioned tasks within 60 days, as stipulated in the R-ARCSS – noting, once again, the financial burden with which it has to

contend. The bigger challenge – not just for the TBC, but for South Sudan as it wrestles to build a functioning nation-state – is seriously investigating what it means to define tribal territories, and what implications such definitions have on those boundaries to be divided or consolidated into states and on the people who will live in and between them (Tombe, 2019).

Kiir continued to push to retain the 32 states system, while opposition groups called into question its legitimacy – arguing that it was created unilaterally and outside the purview of the 2015 agreement. Kiir eventually agreed to return the country to 10 states, just before the February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2020 deadline lapsed (Sullivan, 2019). In addition to the 10 states are three ‘administrative areas’: Ruweng, Pibor and Abyei. Opposition parties are still aggrieved by the decision to include these areas, despite their agreeing to join the newly formed unity government. This is partly owing to the fact that Ruweng is oil-rich and was heavily fought over during the civil war, raising fears that Kiir’s faction would retain significant control over the area and the much sought-after oil revenues (Mutambo, 2019). Ultimately, recognition of a fixed number of states is crucial for how a country will be governed. Should there be an impasse or disagreement on the appointment of governors, thereby creating a power vacuum, South Sudan could be faced with yet another failed attempt at finding lasting peace.

## 2.4 Factors Underpinning Armed Conflicts in South Sudan

### 2.4.1 Historical Legacy

In 1956 Sudan became an independent state, at the time; there was no agreement on whether it should be a unitary or federal state and if the constitution should be based on Islam or whether it should be secular. Hence, the constitution drafted with help from British experts remained temporary (Johnson, 2016). The political elite after independence had been already part of the colonial government before and continued to rule in a similar way and based the governance on their Arab Muslim identity, excluding people of other religions or origins in Sudan (Ylönen, 2016). The elites also tried to impose Islam on people of other religions as well as not letting them participate in the national government. People living at the peripheries had also less access to economic development. This form of inequality between the Arab-Muslim elites from Khartoum and the people of other origins and religions living in the peripheries, has nurtured tension and conflict until today (Johnson, 2016). Exploitation of southern Sudan by authorities from

the north, as well as direct abuses and oppression led to the Torit mutiny in 1955; today it is considered the start of the south Sudanese separatist insurgency movement (Rolandsen and Kindersley, 2017). In the following years civil war broke out with clashes between the southern guerilla fighter named Anya-Nya and forces of the military government. Johnson dates the beginning of the first civil war to 1961-62, because it was in that time, the movement became more organized (Nyedera, 2016). A peace agreement was signed in 1972, granted regional administration for Southern Sudan (Rolandsen and Kindersley, 2017).

In 1983 the authorities dismissed the deal and Sudan fell into the second civil war. In that year the Sudanese People’s Liberation Army (SPLA), this as a political movement is called the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM), was formed. The SPLA/M was led by John Garang de Mabior, belonging to the Dinka ethnic group (LeRiche and Arnold, 2013). Garang fought against the policies of the Sudanese government, but envisioned a unified Sudan in which the South has an equal statute to the North and therefore more opportunities for development (De Waal, 2015).

In 1990 most of southern Sudan was under control of the SPLA. The SPLA split in 1991 and in following years’ different branches fought each other. The main opposition to Garang was Riek Machar, identifying with the Nuer ethnicity; there were several other militias fighting under warlords, connected to certain regional or ethnical groups as in 1997 parts of those militias built the South Sudanese Defense Forces (SSDF) (Rolandsen and Kindersley, 2017).

In 2005 IGAD arranged the signing of a comprehensive peace agreement (CPA), also called Naivasha agreement, between northern and southern Sudan. It was based on the Machakos Protocol and the additional agreements signed between 2002 and 2005. Part of the peace agreement was the establishment of a DDR program in South Sudan (Small Arms Survey, n.d.). The referendum took place in January 2011. A majority of 98.8 per cent of South Sudanese people voted for a secession from Sudan. In July 2011, South Sudan declared independence, which marked the end of the interim period (Gettleman, 2011). Shortly afterwards the new state was recognized internationally and became member of the UN (UNO, 2011). The political environment in the new state remained unstable. Various armed actors posed a threat to the new government and the SPLA

itself was not a united force. At the same time, the humanitarian situation hardly improved. Almost half of the population depended on food aid. The economy struggled with border closures and transit impediments (LeRiche and Arnold, 2013). After secession of the south, major issues as the costs of oil transportation from south to north, the question of the border and what will happen to people residing in the other Sudan, remained unsolved (Rolandsen and Kindersley, 2017).

In December 2013, two years after South Sudan gained independence, president Salva Kiir belonging to the Dinka ethnic group, accused the South Sudanese vice president Riek Machar, belonging to the Nuer ethnic group, of planning a coup d'état. That was the beginning of a relapse into civil war, this time portrayed as a conflict between different ethnic groups in South Sudan (USAID, 2015). Nascimento (2017) criticizes too simplistic explanations for conflict in Sudan, which blame religious or ethnic differences for the reoccurring war (Nascimento, 2017). For the colonial powers ethnic affiliation was a way to organize the territory. People, who did not belong in a clear territory nor had no authority, were forced to move and someone was declared as a state's authority. This mechanism, which proved to be useful in times of colonialism, until today is used by politicians to achieve support from communities to exploit resources and gain power (Rolandsen and Kindersley, 2017). Attributing the causes of armed conflicts in South Sudan to historical legacies is of fewer facts, due to the circumstance that, it is the presence of weak security institutions that was meant to control state from internal fiasco were made to be unrealistic.

#### **2.4.2 Power Struggle**

Violent conflict over power characterizes many conflicts in Africa and elsewhere. Some of these conflicts have been leadership struggles between more or less equally resourced armed factions and some incumbent regimes are dominated by elites whose approach to governance is influenced by their desire to protect their own interests and the interests of their constituencies (Aall, 2015). In Sudan and Southern Sudan in particular by then, the SPLM had been the signatory party to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement that ended the 22 years long war in 2005. That, John Garang, who had led the movement since its establishment in 1983, died in a chopper crash three weeks following his inauguration as the president of the Government of Southern Sudan. His

long-time deputy Salva Kiir took over the position of the president and led the south towards independence in 2011. However, prior to the outbreak of violence on December 15, 2013, there were clues as early as 2008 that all was not well, and that differences within the party portended violence (De Waal, 2014).

The SPLM split in 1991 and the reordering of the SPLM leadership to accommodate Riek Machar on his return were partly to blame for the frosty relationship that carried on into government after independence. In 2010, the two leaders (Kiir and Machar) are said to have supported rival candidates in a number of key electoral positions, particularly the governorships of many states (Ibid.). The tensions within the political class exploded when Vice President Dr. Riek Machar, SPLM Secretary General Pagan Amun, and Madam Rebecca Garang, the widow of the late Dr. John Garang, publicly announced their intention to run for the post of Chair of the SPLM, and thus President of the country. Taking this as a crucial concern, President Kiir removed executive powers from Dr. Riek in April. In July, he dissolved the government, removing Riek and others from any government office (De Waal, 2014).

This dispute, which at first might seem not overly relevant, gets its vital importance within the national context: the election of the chairman of the SPLM is in fact closely associated with the election of the South Sudanese president. That, there is no doubt in the current political system the South Sudanese president will be a representative of the SPLM – the party itself in turn will rely on its leader as a candidate, or he (Kiir) will decide upon another candidate. Therefore, the issue of internal party governance in a context in which the SPLM is not only a player in the political arena, but rather represents the political arena entirely, is a truly national one. This political quarrelling and fury within the ruling party translated into armed conflict between the forces loyal to the two camps. The government's position is that Riek Machar staged an attempted coup d'état against a lawfully elected government, an allegation Riek Machar and his allies vehemently refuted in December 2013. The spread of the crisis gave Riek Machar an opportunity to announce his intent to remove the government of Salva Kiir through the use of military force and thus, re-engendered the seeds of rebellions across the country with diverse emergency of military movements latter (Mutanda, 2015).

(Wel, 2011) argued that, the pure power struggle over leadership, and possibly a little dosage of dictatorship

from Dr. John Garang, was the sole reason for all the squabbling, detentions and the regrettable killings. It had little to do with either ideology or ethnicity because the alliances were never delineated along tribal groupings; and nor did the SPLM/A ever attacked a party formed by secessionists that was fighting the Arabs on the frontlines, the separatists, that ever were, chose to ally themselves with the Arabs where they became a mere tool used to fight the SPLM/A. However, attributing the genesis of the armed conflict that occurred in December 2013 to the power struggle perspective is scanty in its context rather it is the failure to be fixed on the leadership to develop a viable state institution that would have spoil any political miscalculations that are likely to prevail in the post-independence time.

## 2.5 Proliferation of Small Arms

Uncontrolled arms proliferation has a long-term impact on society, after war, weapons often continue to circulate and are used by criminals, insurgent groups and soldiers where education is undermined when schools are destroyed or people are unable to attend classes because of ongoing conflict (Stohl and Grillot, 2009). To understand the problem of proliferation, one has to understand the demand for weapons in the region. The state often has not the capacity to exercise its power in peripheral areas. Police forces are often not sufficient equipped to access remote parts of the country and are received very low salaries (Lommer, 2018). Communities in rural areas have to provide their own security for instance by arming (illicitly or with government help) certain groups, which would protect them from others crossing the border (Ibid.).

The inability of the government to protect its own citizens also leads to violence in urban centers, people arm themselves to protect themselves from crime, which in turn leads to more insecurity because of high arms proliferation (Kiflemariam and Byrne, 2006). Poverty in rural areas is driver for arms demand where people purchase arms to compete for scarce resources as agricultural or grazing land and water (Lommer, 2018). Easy access to arms can change society and traditional structures and result in cycles of violence. The South Sudanese Nuer for instance experienced changes in their cultural habits, when arms became a symbol for wealth, power and masculinity. Arms now make part of rituals and ceremonies as the bride price (Stohl and Grillot, 2009).

The long raging civil war made the distinguishing between civilians and combatants difficult, as

everybody was affected by it. A report from the German Development Institute emphasizes the need of a broad interpretation of the term combatant for a successful DDR process (Banholzer, 2014). The SPLA itself was not united, which led to problems in the disarmament process. Previous conflicts between groups of the SPLA and militias led to mistrust in the communities regarding the objectives of the SPLA. When President Salva Kiir advised authorities of all states to disarm civilians both forcefully and voluntarily, this mistrust hampered the disarmament process in some communities. Different ethnic groups traditionally had armed forces which were not allied with the SPLA. When the government asked them to hand in their weapons, some understood it as an attempt to weaken them (Human Rights Watch, 2009).

(Briedlid and Arensen, 2014; Small Arm Survey, 2014). The linkage between conflicts and militarization is an established process in South Sudan current conflict. Since the eruption of conflict in South Sudan there has been a steady rise in military expenditure and thus easily outstripping social spending. This has created resentments and grievances by the local community because the government is using its large amount of revenue to strengthen itself and fight back the opposition which is at the expense of livelihood improvement of South Sudanese. There is also support to increasing and persistence of guerrilla movements related to the very few employment opportunities available to infantile men. (The Sentry, 2015) South Sudan's military spending is the highest in the region exceeding the country's entire infrastructure budget and almost equal to the accountability budget. That, the South Sudanese military is a very large organization that binds together conventional forces, paramilitaries, and militias through an outsized and complicated patronage system with a security expenses have steadily grown making up at least 40% of the financial plan, as seen in the officially reported figures for 2015 budget.

In fact, the guerrilla organization presents opportunities for survival, rewards, recognition and advancement not available to most civilians in South Sudan. In addition to this, in fulfilling its functions of the guardian of authority and legitimacy, the South Sudan government attempts to accumulate and imports a bulk of modern weapons systems (The Sentry, 2015). What is more, the existence of plentiful weapons as a consequence of post war should not be omitted from the analysis of potential causes of conflict. The second civil war

in Sudan lasted more than two decades and resulted in high militarization and arm proliferation among civilians (Ibid). To justify the above (Al Jazeera, 2017; Daily Nation, 2017) the South Sudanese government is allegedly spending its oil revenue meant to provide welfare for its people in exchange of buying weapons and ammunitions includes 30 T-55 tanks, 20 ZU-23 anti-craft, 5,000 rounds of T-55 tank ammunition, 10 BM-21 grad rocket systems, 10,000 122-mm M210F rockets and inter alia from Ukraine for the army, the security services, militias and other associated forces according to the UN confidential report. However, allotting enormous government spending on the militarization of the services at the expenses of the welfare of the people is a self-defeat approach because it is the function of the rascal state as such, that typify the absence of brawny state in South Sudan that would have met its citizens' welfare that could curtail the risk of any grievances.

## 2.6 Corruption

Corruption is a bug, a cancer that eats into the cultural, political and economic fabric of society, and obliterates the functioning of vital organs. In the words of Transparency International, Corruption is one of the greatest challenges of the up to date world. It undermines good government, fundamentally distorts public policy, leads to the misallocation of resources, harms the private sector and particularly hurts the underprivileged (Amundsen, 1990). Corruption remains to be one of the stumbling blocks for most of the non-industrialized states, Several studies have given evidence that corruption stand as a threat to both good governance and economic prosperity in Africa. According to United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), it had found that the continent had lost more than \$ 148 Billion due to massive corruption in the year 2004 which account for almost 25% of its Gross National Product (GDP) (UNECA, 2009). In addition, the African Development Bank (ADB) in its 2004 report estimate that 50% of the revenue obtained from the tax in the region have ended up in the hands of corrupt personnel's (ADB, 2006). However, in the words of lodge (2000) that political corruption is often perceived to be the especial characteristics of the developing countries (Lodge, 2000).

Corruption in South Sudan is an issue of enormous concern for the government and the public as well and has been the major cause of poor services delivery to the ordinary citizens due to the fact that it benefits the few, leaving the vast preponderance of the population

inaccessible to the national resources (Ayik, 2014). The failure to provide services as expected by all South Sudanese before and immediately after the independence was a big disappointment which lowered the expectations and hopes that after independence, the issue of corruption would become the agenda of the past (Ibid). According to Gorta (1998) as cited in Mills (2012), discussions about the causes of corruption have tended to explain how and why corruption occurs rather than identify deterministic causes. Studies generally produce a mixture of situations, attitudes and processes that might be better understood as enabling factors, indicators or conditions that allow or facilitate corruption. Since South Sudan's independence, the government has largely squandered its economic potential and political goodwill, becoming a kleptocracy where political power is leveraged to secure wealth. The signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005 between the Government of Sudan and SPLM/A was followed by large amplify in government fund. Plus South Sudan has been dominated by rotating set of elites who move seamlessly between positions in government and the frontlines of the rebellion, as political situations change (De Waal, 2014). In July 2013, President Kiir reshuffled his entire cabinet, removing prominent elites, such as Vice President Riak Machar and firing a group of ethnically diverse cabinet Ministers and high level officials accusing them of corruption, most of these individuals had played leading roles in the country's economic and political decisions in the post-independence government, and after being pushed out of the government, many joined a political resistance bloc that soon developed into an armed opposition (Lunn, 2016). Meanwhile, the conflicting parties have sought to consolidate power around their loyalists, particularly those from their particular ethnic group (De Waal, 2014).

(Aljazeera, 2014; International Crisis Group, 2014) Besides, this South Sudan has been crushed down by corruption, patronage, and impunity in fact a case in point in this regard is what happened in the year 2012 where by President Salva Kiir accused 75 ministers and officials of having stolen \$4 billion in state funds and demand the money to be returned, but according to news reports, only 1.5% of this sum was actually recovered. Only a fraction of the recovered wealth was actually reinvested into the country and revenues from the oil sector are rarely reinvested in critical sectors of the economy (Sentry Report, 2015). Meanwhile, elites on both sides have killed tens of thousands of people, displaced over millions, and has

left another million, or around 40% of the population, food insecure but no instrument has not yet been established to hold them accountable till nowadays and hence, conflict persist (Mayai, 2015).

According to Sentry report (2015), South Sudan had squandered its economic potential and political goodwill where the political power is leveraged to control and secure wealth by the elites which passed through a narrow set of hands and been subjected to significant leakage, waste and outright theft that made the measures to combat corruption scanty (Sentry Report, 2015). Where Adeba (2016) had attributed the failure to the lack of funds meant to address skills shortage in forms of forensic capabilities, investigative skills and equipment's and technological knowledge as well where the decision-makers concerned turned to failed to comprehend the subject matter of their task (Adeba, 2016). Awolich and Tiitmamer (2014) argued that South Sudan has tried to curb the growth of corruption in public institutions by professing some commitment in the fight against corruption. some of the efforts adopted by the government to fight corruption so far include; the President's declaration of zero tolerance to corruption, Establishment of Anti-Corruption Commission, Passage of the Southern Sudan Anti-Corruption Commission Act, 2009, Public Financial Management and Accountability Act 2011, Petroleum Act, Petroleum Revenue Management Bill Passed in 2013, South Sudan Penal Code Act, 2008, and the Audit Chamber Act 2011 (Awolich and Tiitmamer, 2014). Riak (2013), the measures put forward by the government to curb corruption had failed owing to the fact that the Anti-Corruption commission lack independence and prosecutorial powers in discharging its functions to combat corruption in the public sector where the prosecutorial powers against corruption lies with the Ministry of Justice. This meant the existing laws do not mandate the commission to prosecute corruption related charges thus, making its functions less effective with no related corruption prosecution (Mayai, 2015). This had contradicted the provision of South Sudan Transitional Constitution 2011 article 143 (1) that regards the establishment of the Anti-Corruption Commission as an independent entity (Ibid.). The transitional constitution 2011 has given the Anti-Corruption Commission investigative and prosecutorial powers with criminal penalties for acts of corruption but the commission in practice do not have authority to prosecute owing to the commission's yet to be amended law to includes the prosecutorial powers (Awolich and Tiitmamer, 2014).

## 2.7 Natural Resources

The pathetic consequences of the South Sudanese conflicts have prompted several scholars to devise new narratives to the forces that normally led to the conflict (Ballentine and Nitzechke 2005, Doyle and Sambanis 2000, O'Brien 2009). Some of these narratives touch on the natural resources more especially oil, others on the access and availability of arms (Nyadera, 2019). Resources in some cases could be a server of conflicts, as most of the scholars developed 'greed and grievance theory' to expound how conflict can arise and culminates into rebel activity, based on the management of the resources of which most of the studies have shown that, in most armed conflicts locations, economic drivers underlined the armed conflicts into which government and rebel group enter (ACCORD, 2009). Ganesan and Vines (2004) argued that control over the resources reinforced political power; this often contributes to war recurrence and exacerbate corruption, as economically resourced government can easily create channels through which to divert funds where such government are unaccountable and generally collude with external actors, who help them consolidate their war project and thus, become warlords (Ganesan and Vines, 2004).

South Sudan is a resource rich country with fertile agricultural land. Its most important resource is oil, Sudan started to export oil in 1999, with most of the sources located in the southern part of the country. With 98 per cent of the national budget originating from oil revenues, South Sudan depended heavily on the oil industry after 2005 (Rolandsen and Kindersley, 2017). With independence South Sudan became a landlocked state and had therefore to find a new way to access seaports (Dias, 2013). Following the protocols of principles of comprehensive peace agreement have constituted the oil wealth share as win-win gain between Northern and Southern Sudan and the allocation of 2% of the wealth to the communities where the oil is found but such was undermined by the procedural irregularities that could be constructed as weaknesses such as the lack of an established system of reporting and a system for verifying productions sales and accounts (ACCORD, 2009). As long as leaders allowed themselves to be driven by the economic interests, there are likely to be recurrent incidences of conflicts and abuses (Ibid.).

The narrative of oil underpinning the conflict in South Sudan has been highly favored by the various scholars who argued that, the warring parties in conflict are

always keen on controlling oil and other natural resources (Sachs and Werner, 2001; Ballentine and Nitzechke 2005). Fearon and Laitin (2003), and De Soysa (2002) adopted different data sets, but also concluded that there is a causal relationship between oil resources and civil wars. Indeed, in the case of South Sudan, oil is the most important source of government revenue, and oil-producing states such as Unity, Jonglei, and Upper Nile have seen the worst of the civil war with some of the most intense combat operations reportedly happening in these areas.

An investigative initiative conducted by Sentry, a US-based think-tank, gave a report alleging that oil revenues are used to finance and sustain the ongoing civil war and to enrich a small group of people in South Sudan (Bariyo, 2014). This report was dismissed by the government spokesperson, Ateny Wek Ateny, who during an interview with Reuters insisted that oil revenues are being used to pay civil servants, stating: ‘The oil money did not even buy a knife. It is being used for paying the salaries of the civil servants’ (Reuters 2014).

## **2.8 Mechanisms of R-ARCSS for Sustaining Durable Peace in South Sudan**

### **2.8.1 National Dialogue**

This section examines and presents various discourses on the SSND, mainly its challenges and their implications for the CTRH. This is particularly because the proposed truth-telling process under the CTRH emphasizes addressing legacies of the conflict, promotion of peace, national reconciliation, and healing (IGAD 2018), objectives similar to those of the SSND (Deng, 2017). The major difference between the SSND and the CTRH is that the former was initiated prior to the signing of the R-ARCSS while the latter is part of and an outcome of the agreement. However, given the fact that the SSND dragged on to late 2020, way into the implementation of the peace deal, and the fact that the political terrain in the country has not changed significantly, it is plausible to think of similar and/or related challenges recurring during the CTRH process.

The SSND was initiated by President Kiir in December 2016, ostensibly with the intention of collecting the views of the people of South Sudan on how to resolve the conflict and foster healing and reconciliation (HRC, 2020). The structural framework that was put in place to facilitate the SSND included the nine-member national leadership, a ninety-seven-member steering committee (NDSC), and the Secretariat,

and the stakeholder and partner forums (Vhumbunu, 2018). The composition of the 15 subcommittees for regional and grass-roots consultations was by personal choice of the members of the Steering Committee. This means members were free to decide which regional subcommittee to join so long as each of the committees did not exceed five members (Deng, 2017). Multifaceted in the nature of issues to be tackled, the SSND was expected to be broad based and comprehensive with the aim to ‘promote peace, national unity, equitable socio-economic development, and a shared sense of national purpose’ (Deng, 2017).

Generally, ‘there were mixed reactions since some people thought it was a noble and indeed timely initiative, and others pessimistically feared that it would not amount to much’ (Deng, 2017). Nevertheless, the SSND conducted hearings, and gathered and analyzed information from both within and outside South Sudan in preparation for a national conference that was scheduled to take place in March 2020, the conference was postponed first due to the business of the President and later due to COVID-19 pandemic (HRC, 2020). The SSND finally held the national conference on 3–15 November 2020 in which President Kiir was represented by Vice President Hussein Abdelbagi (SSND 2020) and concluded its work by publishing a report where most of the issues contained in the SSND final report are well documented in other relevant documents (Ibid.). Noteworthy is that the report clearly indicates that ‘the people of South Sudan at the grass roots are deeply aware of the leadership failure and the political deadlock which has dogged this country for a long time, demanding both President

Kiir and Dr. Riek Machar to leave politics, if South Sudan is to ever move forward’ (Sudan’s Post, 2020). The fate of the outcomes of the SSND is unknown vested on its recommendation requiring the stepping down of Kiir and Machar, the main protagonists in the South Sudan armed conflict, means that the report may never be implemented under the duo’s leadership. This may be the case should either of the two become President following the expiry of the mandate of the RTGoNU. Certainly, it is difficult for leaders to follow up on initiatives whose recommendations negatively implicate them (Ibid). In Kenya, for example, it is believed that part of the reason the government has never implemented the recommendations of the 2013 Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJTC) is because it implicates people in power,

including President Kenyatta's family (Ibid.). Against the general feeling that the SSND did not amount to much, those in government argue that it was a success. For instance, 'the national dialogue has been a great success ... has helped diffuse the violence and foster reconciliation' (Interview-SSGO1 12 March 2020). Interestingly, government equally applauds the success of the national dialogue, calls on the 'international community and friends of South Sudan to support the CTRH with resources and capacity' arguing that 'government alone cannot manage the tasks of CTRH' (Ibid.).

The question that then arises is how the country could have conducted—successfully so—the national dialogue but cannot afford to carry out a truth-telling process, given that the spirit, structure, and operation of the two are strikingly similar. The timing and manner in which the SSND was established created considerable concern, leading to its rejection by some South Sudanese stakeholders, notably the opposition. It occurred through a presidential decree, while South Sudan was still in conflict, causing profound cynicism among many South Sudanese (HRC, 2020). The SSND suffered lack of inclusion, lack of a conducive environment, mistrust and misperceptions by some stakeholders, poorly attended consultation forums, shortage of resources, and fear (Vhumbunu, 2018). Furthermore, rampant insecurity and poor transport and communication infrastructure and other logistical nightmares significantly limited its operations (Ibid.). The opposition boycotted the dialogue by claiming it was unilateral and partial with one dismissing it as 'Salva's meaningless project' (Interview-IO 13 February 2020). This dealt a major blow to the process. As argued by Paffenholz et al. (2017), national elites are key determinants of the successes of such dialogues where nonparticipation of the opposition leaders significantly compromised the SSND's legitimacy and credibility. Though, South Sudan National Dialogue is a key mechanism for addressing the root causes of the armed conflicts and helps difused the suffering of the people, yet it had not fulfilled its policies that suffered public wide criticism as a tool for regime sustainability by the government and its protégés.

## 2.9 Hybrid Court for South Sudan – Accountability

South Sudan has approved the establishment of the HCSS, ushering in a new phase in the accountability discourse (Tut Pur, 2021). Besides a view of forgiveness and reconciliation as a viable

path to peace (Interview-RL 19 November 2019). The mandate of the HCSS is 'to investigate, and where necessary, prosecute individuals bearing responsibility for violations of international law and/or applicable South Sudanese laws, committed from 15th December 2013 to the end of the transitional period'. By stating that 'no immunity from serious crimes shall be permissible' (Akech, 2020), the R-ARCSS underscores the demand for justice that under the HCSS is international in its orientation. The justification for internationalization of justice relates to the nature of the crimes that victimize humanity, and trigger internationalized insecurities and humanitarian crises and insufficiencies of domestic institutions (Drumbl, 2007). As observed by Owiso (2019), 'violations committed during violent conflict generally fall within the purview of international human rights law and international humanitarian law'. Yet international justice is heavily contested largely due its perceived vulnerability to external interference (Krcmaric, 2018; Akech 2020).

The R-ARCSS stipulates that the HCSS should operate outside the structures of the national judiciary and assume primacy over national courts. It further provides that '[the] majority of the judges shall be drawn from African countries other than South Sudan and that the hybrid court's structure, seat and composition are to be decided by the AUC' (Akech, 2020). Furthermore, external actors, like the European Union, and Western nations are outspoken in their support for the HCSS, making it a highly contested topic both in and outside South Sudan (Sudan Tribune 16 November 2015). In his classic work Huntington (1991) warns that 'prosecutions could destroy the necessary basis for democracy'. Bringing in the notion of timing, he argued that, if they should be conducted at all, then trials ought to be conducted immediately after the transition'. As recounted by Sikkink and Walling (2007), 'many actors directly involved in transitions were often equally pessimistic'. For example, Jose Zalaquett (1990), a Chilean Human Rights lawyer, who argued for the inadequacies of trials to 'deal with perpetrators who still wield considerable power' (Williams and Deng, 2016).

Africa and the International Criminal Court (ICC) have featured prominently in recent discourses on international criminal justice (Sunga 2014, Benyera 2018, and Chipaika et al. 2019). The ICC Africa question is complex and perforated with controversies. These include claims that the ICC is selectively targeting

and/or using Africa as a laboratory or a scapegoat, or that in its quest to achieve legitimacy and credibility the ICC had to begin with the weakest and not necessarily the most criminal elements (Imoedemhe, 2015). The fact that the ICC is based in the West with most of those standing trial being Africans has seen the debate on the court take an Africa vs. the West stance. Differences on foundational philosophies and normative commitments are, in part, causes for the visible friction between the West and Africa when it comes to international criminal justice.

The ICC question is significant to the HCSS given that some of IGAD member states (Kenya and Sudan) that negotiated the South Sudan peace agreement have been at the centre of the Africa ICC tussle. In the case of South Sudan, opinion is divided between those who propose international mechanisms and those who argue in favour of local ones. The debate tends to create a dichotomy that (re)produces the West vs. Africa dichotomy (Williams and Deng, 2016). The implication is that actors from the West agitate for international mechanisms of justice because they have faith in such mechanisms and/or lack faith in local ones, while African leaders propose local mechanisms because they can manipulate them (Interview-ED June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020). Hybridity emerged out of these debates, yet hybrid mechanisms are equally contentious.

Hybrid justice mechanisms are generally known to divide judicial responsibilities between the United Nations or its entities, and or other regional bodies and the concerned state. Among many other places, those models have been tried in East Timor, Kosovo, and Sierra Leone (Dickinson, 2003). Some experts see 'hybrid' courts as a better model, with Sierra Leone and Cambodia presented as remedial to the challenges of the Rwandan and Yugoslavian tribunals, which were seen as distant, bureaucratic, and expensive (Stensrud, 2009). Although these traditions are not incommensurable with Western systems, and share points of commonality, they differ in significant ways, including when it comes to rationales for and modalities of punishment (Drumbl, 2007). While hybridity may be seen as, among other things, a way to bridge the Africa vs. the West dichotomy, discourse on the HCSS appear to reproduce the said friction between local and international conceptions and approaches to criminal justice (Ibid). Though, Hybrid Court for South Sudan meant to engender the true accountability for the crimes and crimes against humanity committed during the 2013 South Sudan

civil war is much unlikely to yield good result due to the fact that, most of the perpetrators are still powerful in the government and armed opposition holding top military and political leadership.

## **2.10 Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing (CTRH)**

The International Center for Transitional Justice (2009) conceptualizes transitional justice as involving: a particular conception of justice; a field of policy expertise; a branch of research and law; a unique form of human rights advocacy and activism; and an academic discipline. Trials, truth commissions, amnesties, reparations, and lustration are the most common transitional justice mechanisms (Olsen et al., 2010). At the core of transitional justice is the demand for justice and the need for peace (Sriram and Pillay, 2010). While justice and peace are equally important, overemphasis on either may prove detrimental to the other posing transitional justice's greatest dilemma (Prorok, 2017).

Since the Nuremberg war crimes trials (Teitel 2003, P:70), transitional justice has emerged as a 'globally recognized response to human rights violations after violent conflicts' (Bentrovato, 2017, P: 396) with many countries employing its mechanisms (Olsen et al., 2010, and Matsunaga, 2016). Examples are amnesties in Spain (Jimeno 2017), mixed courts in Cambodia and Sierra Leone (Stensrud 2009), truth and reconciliation in South Africa (Gibson 2006), among many others (Murphy, 2017). Between 1970 and 2007 there were 81 trials in 38 countries, 53 truth commissions in 37 countries, 229 amnesties in 72 countries, 23 reparations programmes in 18 countries, and 34 lustration policies in 23 countries (Olsen et al., 2010). Drawing on the cases of Cambodia, Rwanda, East Timor, and Sierra Leone, Lambourne (2009) sees transformative models of transitional justice as potentially aiding peace building processes. Yet the said transformative model for peace building during transition calls for an interrogation of whose justice it delivers. Lundy and McGovern (2008) strongly argued for a participatory approach that allows a consensual, broad-based concept of justice acceptable by those concerned. While some pundits warn against narrowing and de-politicization of transitional justice, its broad and political nature raises challenges related to when, to whom, and for what transitional justice apply (Nagy, 2008).

The main aim of the CTRH is to uncover the truth about past abuses and promote healing. It is explicitly

linked to the Compensation and Reparation Authority (CRA) in terms of reparation of victims through the Compensation and Reparation Fund (CRF) (Akech, 2020). According to Article 5.4 of the R-ARCSS (IGAD 2018), the CRF will ‘provide material and financial support to citizens whose property was destroyed by the conflict and help them to rebuild their livelihoods’. The CRA will also receive applications from victims recorded by the CTRH and provide them with ‘appropriate compensation and reparation’ (IGAD 2018). Reparation is a well-established mechanism of transitional justice that has been practiced in many countries (Oola and Moffet, n.d). The healing value of truth-telling is not dominant in current discourse on transitional justice in South Sudan, it is a marginal narrative largely domiciled within sections of religious circles. What is vivid is a view of truth-telling as an acknowledgement of wrongs and as a form of recognition and restoration of dignity to the victims (AU 2014). There is literature that argues in support of these claims. For example, Biggar (2003) opines that ‘truth-telling entails recognition of injuries hence acknowledging the dignity of the direct victims’.

The need for truth-telling comes across as one of the few aspects acceptable across the board as representatives both from the incumbent government (Interview-SSGO1 12 March 2020) and the opposition (Interview-IO 13 February 2020) generally agree on the need for the people of South

Sudan to know what exactly happened. However, as Owiso (2019) observes, seeking the ‘truth’ after a devastating, multilayered, and complex conflict is such a daunting task. Furthermore, those responsible for this process need to pay attention to the fact that management of the truth is an equally complicated undertaking. For example, the case of Rwanda reveals how experiences of truth-telling may result in re-traumatization (Brounéus, 2010). Transitional justice mechanisms are deeply political processes whose successes or failures largely depend on the prevailing and evolving political dynamics. For South Sudan, transitional justice mechanisms are crafted into the R-ARCSS, an agreement that is itself an outcome of contentions and antagonisms between and among many actors both within and outside South Sudan (Verjee, 2020).

De Waal (2015), through his ‘political marketplace’ concept, reveals the complexity characterizing politics in South Sudan and their historical and regional dimensions. Even as this discourse on transitional justice goes on, it is worthwhile noting that political

goodwill from South Sudanese political elites and their regional and global networks is fundamental. While South Sudanese leaders may publicly claim to support the establishment of the HCSS, which has since been approved, they do not seem to have the appetite for justice. For example, those aligned to the incumbent government accuse the SPLM-IO of not being willing to participate in the national dialogue, while those on the side of SPLM-IO posit that the dialogue was unilateral and one-side. Their shrewdness is even subtle on the question of accountability, although they all claim to support the establishment of the HCSS (Ibid.).

Acceptance and even calls for justice, from either side of the protagonists, may be more about tactical political maneuvering than expressions of genuine desires for justice. In fact, the positions that each party takes on the matter of HCSS have been found to be quite polarizing, leading to more factions within different parties. For example, a senior member of SPLM-IO questions Machar’s consent to the HCSS, stating that he had ‘difficulties explaining to some of our boys that we will ensure they are not locked in’ (Interview-IO 13 February 2020). This may be fodder for continued insecurity since lower cadre fighters may not feel protected from impending punishment. The UN Human Rights Council (2020) documents shown how delay tactics have been employed in frustrating the process of establishing the HCSS. It has taken tremendous diplomatic efforts and strategic pressure to have the hybrid court finally approved. However, approval of the court is one thing and operationalizing it is quite another. For example, there is a need to ensure that ‘transitional justice is pursued as an integral component of peace building and development in South Sudan, including by ensuring appropriate allocation of adequate resources’ (Ibid.).

Yet the leadership of South Sudan hides behind insufficiency of resources and prioritization. As one of the diplomats rightly observed, ‘this brings about a major dilemma particularly to external actors ... are you going to put money on more pressing basic needs like food and healthcare or on pursuing criminal justice?’ (Interview-ED 05 June 2020). This has equally led to lack of coordinated efforts in supporting transitional justice processes as each actor tends to seek different pathways to make their contribution based on their own policies. The R-ARCSS brings people who deeply mistrust each other together. South Sudanese leaders may not necessarily be establishing transitional justice mechanisms for the purpose of

ensuring justice and building peace. To the contrary, they will attempt to use their positions of power to influence the transitional justice mechanisms to their advantage. Criminal prosecutions, for instance, may be weaponised to punish political opponents as opposed to delivering justice, and the truth-telling process may be manipulated to reward certain constituencies through reparations.

The level of mistrust and political maneuvering by South Sudanese political elites, under the current Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity (R-TGoNU), arguably makes the prevailing political environment unsupportive of the proposed transitional justice mechanisms.

## 2.11 Theoretical Framework

### 2.11.1 Realism

Realism, one of the International Relations (IR) theories, can be used to explain the dynamics and potential consequences of an intrastate security dilemma. Realists believe in the anarchic nature of international politics, where there is no overarching government that provides security to all (Jackson and Sørensen, 2010). The anarchic situation inevitably motivates states to ensure their own security by reinforcing defensive capabilities, which is likely to threaten the security of others (Posen, 1993). In response, those who are threatened in turn develop their own defensive capacities, eventually threatening the security of those who initiated the reinforcement. This endless round of arms race is referred to as the security dilemma. Once trapped into a security dilemma, it is difficult for states to maneuver outside of it. Uncertainty about others' intentions creates mistrust and fear of being cheated and harmed (Roe, 1999).

Hence, being fearful of others' malign intents, cooperation on disarmament is unlikely in the anarchic international system. An increased security dilemma can motivate states to initiate pre-emptive measures based on the assumption that a first offensive strike would be more effective than defensive operations to survive and achieve greater security (Posen, 1993). Under the anarchic situation where no state is guaranteed its security and others are perceived as potential threats, 'the occurrence of security dilemmas always remains a possibility' (Roe, 1999). A security dilemma can also occur in the intrastate context, if, as Posen (1993) as cited in (Roe 1999) argues, 'conditions are similar to those between states in the international system'. The hard rationalist approach

suggests that, under the circumstance where there is no functioning government that can provide security to its citizens, anarchy is likely to emerge (Kaufman, 2001).

Anarchy, together with a group's tendency to associate the identity of others with a danger, often compels the groups to mobilize their security measures, including pre-emptive war, which aim to threaten the security of others but, in turn, undermine the security of those who first mobilized

(Posen, 1993). The real dilemma conflicting party's face is between maintaining the status quo that makes them insecure and developing armament that consequently makes them insecure as well; an intrastate security dilemma will thus emerge through similar processes as those seen in international security dilemmas (Ibid). An intrastate security dilemma is often associated with groups' identities, such as ethnicity or religion. Kaufman (2001) illustrates how an 'ethnic security dilemma' precipitates violent conflict among ethnic groups. An ethnic security dilemma often indicates groups' fear of extinction, which justifies 'hostile attitudes toward the other group and extreme measures in self defense (Ibid). Young and Sing'Oei (quoted in Kaufman, 2001) elaborate that the hostility toward 'them' increases the unity of the group and encourages group members to view every incident through the ethnic lens, which solidifies ethnic hatred.

Horowitz (1991) cited in (Kaufman, 2001) stresses that 'emotions ... are what drive armed violence'. Diamond (1987) also highlights that those who are fearful of extinction and tend to strike first are often marginalized in society. Once the marginalized group initiates an attack on the other, a perceived threat becomes a real threat (Roe, 1999), which exacerbates an existing security dilemma. The worst-case scenario would be that ethnic groups are trapped into a spiral of an 'action-reaction process' (Roe, 1999). As Kaufman (1996) puts it, ethnic animosity and fear of extinction seemingly activate the security dilemma, which can erupt into 'mass-led violence'. In the post-conflict context, disarmament campaigns led by a state or external actors can engender or aggravate an intrastate security dilemma. Armed factions are often unwilling to disarm because the security sector of the fragile state is not trusted and often incapable of providing common security. In this case, disarmament makes the parties vulnerable to potential attacks by a rival (Walter, 1999).

The parties often view even a slight possibility of being attacked as an extremely grave risk (Walter, 1997). Some groups might see others' disarmament as a 'window of opportunity' to initiate a war because they perceive their military capabilities as superior to those of others and believe that relative security will be greatly enhanced by pre-emptive operations (Posen, 1993). This consequently worsens the existing security dilemma. Moreover, a weak state often uses coercive measures on certain ethnic groups to maintain social cohesion, which engenders an ethnic security dilemma. Post-conflict disarmament could thus be a source of an intrastate security dilemma (Roe, 1999). The lack of government capabilities to provide security to its citizens, which created a state of anarchy within the country could resist disarmament and oneself responsibility for own security. The UNMISS (2017) reported that both the national police and the security forces lacked capacities to provide security because of inadequate logistical, human and financial resources and the difficulty of accessing many of the regions which lack functioning roads. The absence of a formal justice system has also created a lawlessness situation and resulted in a culture of impunity, in which perpetrators of violence are rarely prosecuted (ICG, 2018).

Due to the non-existence of the unified forces on the ground as per R-ARCSS has fertile a space for security dilemma between the SPLM-IG and SPLM-IO which led to the arm race between the former and the latter and hence, creates insecurity in the country due to the fact that, the existence of different army factions had made it difficult for the realization of stable security in the country due to rampant skirmishes in post-R-ARCSS.

## 2.12 Consociational Theory

Consociational theorists argued that, the destabilizing effects of sub-cultural or territorial segmentation are neutralized at the elite level by embracing non-majoritarian mechanisms for conflict resolution (Andeweg, 2000; McGrattan, 2012). However, some scholars (O'Leary, 2003; Barry, 2006) caution that even though the model attracted curiosity in resolving conflicts in moderately divided Anglo-Saxon countries, it might worsen the situation in multipolar societies. This is particularly the case of South Sudan where the historical injustices provoke hostile emotions along ethnic 'fault lines'. Helen Kyed and Mikael Graves (2015) on the other hand, are hopeful that efforts to link economic and territorial pillars in peacemaking processes could develop 'trust' among

the warring groups, hence leading to sustainable peace (MacGinty, 2010). Still, while anti-consociational narratives admit that cultural and political integrative approaches sound logical in addressing identity issues, they remain skeptical and claim that according to lessons from Europe (for example, Northern Ireland) transforming conflict through 'identity change' is always challenging in deeply divided societies (Kunze, 2015). While other scholars argued that the formal institutions of power sharing are insufficient and therefore; incapable of overcoming the belligerent and unspoken self-interests of the leading political elites (Seymour, 2014; Cammett and Malesky, 2012). The principle of self-government dictates that each faction to the conflict enjoys some measure of autonomy. In culturally divided societies, where the warring groups are concerned with identities, there should be an arrangement to have self-governance on matters of cultural concern (Jinadu, 1985).

Affirmative action as a tool for consociationalism is a problem, in situations of 'self-determination disputes', ethno-national communities focus on contested homelands. The unresolved question is then, who should exercise power at the level of central government? In such cases, the effectiveness of federalism and consociationalism as conflict resolution mechanisms may be limited where competition to control the state and its resources has compelled political parties to cross-cut ethnic cleavages (Ibid). Critiques of consociationalism on the basis of the self-autonomy principle raise concerns that the approach is too elitist and that executive instruments of policymaking and conflict regulation lack popular control to bring peace to the 'grass-root' level (Hueglin, 1985; Dixon, 1996).

The principle of proportionality assumes that economic, political and territorial resources in divided societies can be distributed proportionally. For instance, each belligerent group is represented proportionally in key public institutions and is a beneficiary of public resources and expenditures in pro rata measures (McGarry, 1988). In fragile post-conflict societies, scholars have underscored the use of the 'closed-list proportional representation' electoral system as the most effective power-sharing mechanism (Cammett and Malesky, 2012). They further observe that this approach to conflict resolution, if well executed, might produce not only good governance, but also stability, and might prevent recurrence of conflict by emphasizing the application of democratic processes such as voting and equitable distribution of state power (Cammett and Malesky, 2012).

This notwithstanding, the institution of democracy is difficult to attain because the ‘majority votes and seats can dominate minority groups’ (Ottaway, 2003).

The final principle is mutual veto, which is the most complex to implement. It assumes that, when resolving conflict instigated by ethnic political competition, a feature that characterizes South Sudan’s conflict, mechanisms should be put in place to prevent domination in decisionmaking processes. This, however, was not done in South Sudan and what accordingly happened was the SPLM-IO fall-out and the subsequent divorce between Dr. Riek Machar and President Salva Kiir. Heavy-weight political maneuvers around individual-based political settlements, may anyway be expected in fragile states (Menocal, 2011). Despite numerous interventions, sustainable peace in South Sudan remains elusive, which prompts the question why the formal institutions based on the principles of consociationalism are insufficient to deliver peace in the country. The factional fighting that broke out in Juba between the SPLM-IG and SPLM-IO on 10 July 2016, distorted the peace deal that had been agreed upon. The quest for peace is complicated by both structural and systemic factors such as weak institutions of governance, challenges associated with the politics of power-sharing, politico ethnic complications, territorial tensions, militarization of the peace process, and proliferation of parties to the peace process.

In regard to the first problem, there is the missing link between the governing institutions and the prioritization of the socio-economic and cultural needs (Apuuli, 2015). The Transitional Government of National Unity (TGoNU) formed on 29 April 2016 was not enshrined in the Constitution. It was obvious that there were articles of the peace agreement which were in stark contradiction with provisions of the Transitional Constitution of South Sudan (TCSS) (Wassara 2016). People expected the harmonization of the TCSS with the ARCSS, which did not happen until violence engulfed the country on 10 July 2016 (Ibid). The second complication arises from the politics of power sharing. Lijphart (1975) has defined consociationalism as requiring a ‘grand coalition’. The formation of a grand coalition has, however, been viewed as the main weakness in the design of power-sharing agreements (McGarry and O’Leary, 2004). The South Sudan case helps realize that, although grand coalitions are empirical possibilities, what makes consociations feasible and workable is joint consent across the significant communities,

with emphasis on ‘joint’ as opposed to ‘parallelism’ (Wassara, 2016).

The peace deal of August 2015 had suffered sluggish implementation, amid struggles in the ranks of political elites. Engagement of regional states in South Sudan conflict resolution remains controversial. For instance, Uganda called for a mini-summit comprised of Ethiopia, Kenya, South Sudan and Uganda. The purpose of the mini-summit was to assure President Salva Kiir that those provisions he disagreed with will be dropped from the text of the agreement (Africa Confidential, 2016). The provisions of the agreement objected to by the government of South Sudan were, among others, the demilitarization of Juba, the withdrawal of foreign troops from South Sudan, the monitoring and verification mechanism, the cantonment of forces, the accountability for war crimes, and separate armies. Tensions among mediators persisted until the deal dubbed Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (ARCSS) was signed on 17 August 2015 (Ibid.).

Thirdly, the deepening politico-ethnic division complicates the deal. Political settlement is one of the dimensions of the power-sharing method of conflict resolution (Hartmann, 2013). In July 2016, the two rival groups fought fiercely in Juba with accusations and counter-accusations of attempted assassination of their respective leaders by the other group.

In this case, the creation of a consociational political compromise was required. The Caroline Hartzell and Matthew Hoddie (2003) model of political power sharing recommends that in a divided society, peace settlements should not only lay down structures for distributing political power in the core governing institutions of the state among groups, but also organize security structures in a manner that provides a ‘fall-back’ scenario for each party. The August 2015 power-sharing arrangement did allow former Vice President Dr Riek Machar to retain soldiers loyal to SPLM-IO, but that was contrary to the host of reservations levelled against the August peace agreement by President Salva Kiir. Critiques of power sharing are skeptical of its success in resolving complex conflicts (Spears, 2015).

The fourth complication arises from the very principle of power sharing between territorial sections of a country. Andreas Mehler (2009a) identifies four dimensions of power sharing such as inclusiveness, degree of power, level of power sharing, and relative prominence of negotiators. Others, however, have

cautioned that power sharing in Africa is narrowly exercised through federalism and decentralization (Zanker et al. 2015). Federalism and decentralization of power is usually achieved through the constitutionally entrenched system of governance that demands greater autonomy (Dash, 2007). In South Sudan, the question of devolving power is not adequately addressed within the existing devolved structures of governance. The SPLM-IO prefers federalism and defines it as a system in which power is shared between multiple levels of government as a means of arresting ethnic or regional divisions (Adeba 2015; Pospieszna and Schneider, 2013).

Fifth, the militarization of the peace process introduces further complications. Military power sharing 'seeks to distribute authority within the coercive apparatus of the state' (Hartzell and Hoddie, 2015). In this case, warring groups are integrated into a 'unified' state security force (Hoddie and Hartzell, 2003). It seeks to specify the details around staffing, chain of command and control, and make-up of the state's coercive agencies. In line with this military strategy, the August 2015 peace agreement included proportional numbers of forces mainly from SPLM-IG and SPLM-IO. The military dominant arrangement seems to have entrenched what Clemence Pinaud (2014) describes as 'dominant classes, and which caused a situation that led to violence in Juba.

Finally, the increase in the number of actors in the peace process is a factor that perpetuates contradictory articulation of demands. In the past, mediators used to deal with the Government and the two factions of the SPLM (in opposition and former detainees) but other non-state actors have emerged such as the National Salvation Front (NAS), the South Sudan National Movement for Change (SSNMC), the National Democratic Movement (NDM), civil society organizations, and faith-based organizations accusing the government of lacking political will to negotiate meaningful peace (Wassara and Kurimoto, 2017).

This proliferation of actors in the conflict and the growing distrust in the President Kiir-led government has led to the failure of the IGAD initiative to make peace deals during the second round of negotiations in 2018. These structural challenges continue to diminish hopes that the IGAD-led revitalization process will bear fruit. The process which at best can be described as the 'old' camouflaged as 'new' is unlikely to result in any meaningful progress in the search for peace.

This is due to the challenges of the previous efforts, such as inability to resolve the deeply entrenched mistrust among the various stakeholders and dismissal

of the revitalization process as Troika-controlled. The threats by IGAD to freeze bank accounts of peace spoilers will not move the main protagonist in the conflict due to the lack of political leverage and clout, and converging interests from within and across the region. Failure to build trust among the key protagonists and other actors in the conflict and fatigue may impede the would-be peace promoters. The economy will then probably continue to plunge, the humanitarian situation may degrade, and the likelihood of South Sudan becoming an elapsed country may become a reality. As Spears (1999) put it, the failure/success of power sharing consociational arrangements depends on the capacities and interests of armed groups involved in or excluded from an agreement.

### 3. Research Methodology

#### 3.1 Research Design

A descriptive survey research design was used. A survey was used to collect data for describing population too large to cover directly. A survey obtains information from sample population by means of self-report, that is, the people selected respond to a series of questions posed by researcher through questionnaire. A descriptive survey is selected because it provides an accurate portrayal of the characteristics, for example behaviors, opinions, beliefs, and knowledge of particular individual, situation or group (Elizala, 2014). This particular methodology was chosen to meet the objectives of the study and research questions as stated. The choice of the research design is being determined by the nature of the problem under study. The researcher believed the design gave best understanding or developed more complete understanding of the research problem by obtaining different but complementary data. The choice is further enabled by the nature of study.

#### 3.2 Targeted Population

According to Walter (1996), "a population is defined as all the elements (individuals, objects, and events) that meet the sample criteria for inclusion in the study". The target populations for this study were the people based in Juba who have believed to have an extensive background on the problem under the study as per the prior studies by the researchers on the nature of the respondents selected.

#### 3.3 Sample Size

Walter (1996) defines a sample as an element selected with the intension of finding out something about the total population from which they are taken. A total of

convenient sample of 100 participants were selected for this study. The sample which includes 100 respondents is believed to give good and meaningful results about the entire population they represent. Large numbers of subjects are selected because they represented the large population under-study.

### 3.4 Sampling Techniques

Sampling is a means of selecting a section of the group from the population to represent the traits of the whole group or the population of the interest. The vital part of the sampling is its reduction on the length of the time needed to complete the study and cuts cost (Saunders, 2000) as cited in (Kinyua, 2015). This study employed simple random sampling to select the samples for quantitative and qualitative data. In simple random sampling, individuals are chosen at random and not more than once to prevent bias that would negatively affect the validity of the results. Simple random sampling is the basic probability sampling technique. It is a method of sampling, which provides every element in the population an equal, and known chance of being selected in the sample. It was used to select the samples from the population for the study. It ensures that each member of the target population has an equal and independent chance of being included in the sample. It reduces the potential for bias in the selection of cases to be included in the sample. As a result, the simple random sample provides a sample that is highly representative of the population being studied, assuming that there would be limited missing data. Since the units selected for inclusion in the sample are chosen using probabilistic methods, simple random sampling allows making of generalizations from the sample to the larger population. To capture a relevant primary data, the study adopted purposive sampling technique that target the officials in the national government ministries such as Cabinet Affairs, Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation; National Parliament and the targeted academicians due to the fact that by the virtue of the institutions they work in and the positions they held is actually of a great advantage towards the assessment of the project.

### 3.5 Data Collection Instrument

This refers to the tools to be used for collecting data. In this study, one (1) instrument was used to collect the required information. The selection of this tool was guided by the nature of data to be collected. The overall aim of this study is to find out the views, opinions, perceptions, feelings and attitudes of the target population about the problem under the study.

Such information can best be collected through questionnaire.

### 3.6 Questionnaire

The questionnaire for this study was both closed-ended and open-ended to allow respondents to express their views, opinions, and feelings about the issue under study. The questionnaire was self-administered to research participants. Questionnaire is preferred for this study because it has the ability to collect large amount of data in short period of time given the limited time for this study. The questionnaire covered background – demographic information, attitude questions – that allowed respondents to give their opinion and knowledge about the study. The choice of this tool for this particular population is determined by number of participants expected to participate in the study. The sample size is quite large, using other tools for data collection may not be appropriate. The sample can best be captured by questionnaire. The group to be targeted is also literate reading and answering the questions may not present any difficulty.

### 3.7 Piloting

The researchers used pilot study to selected people. The selected respondents have similar characteristics to the respondents who responded to the questionnaire of this study. Five people were selected for piloting, and questionnaires were distributed to them and collected after being filled. The researcher then went through the responses to check out any ambiguities inherent to be adjusted, as well as find out the level of understanding and relevance exhibited by the responses.

### 3.8 Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

Validity refers to the extent to which the research instruments measure what they are intended to measure (Golafshani, 2003). To establish validity, the data collection instrument was given to the supervisor to evaluate the relevance of each item in the instrument in relation to the objectives of the study. Borg and Gall (1989) as cited by Moraa (2012) noted “the validity of an instrument is improved through expert judgment”. The researcher therefore sought assistance from the supervisor to improve the validity of the instrument that was used in the study. The instrument was given to the supervisor individually and after ascertaining their relevance, they were put into use. To control quality, the researcher endeavor to attain reliability co- efficient of at least 70%. Reliability refers to the consistency of research and the extent to which the

study results can be replicated. The research results can be accurately interpreted and generalized to other populations that have similar characteristics (Golafshani, 2003). The test-retest method was used to estimate the degree to which the same results can be obtained with a repeated measure of accuracy of the same concept. The test results from pilot study were used to determine the reliability of this study results.

### 3.9 Data Analysis

The qualitative data were analyzed using a thematic analysis through highlighting the emerging themes. This involves the formulation of stories presented by respondents taking into account context of each case and different experiences of each respondent. This involved developing and applying codes. The codes represent a theme or an idea from the responses of the sampled group members. The researcher scanned the primary data for words and phrases commonly used by respondents, then comparing the findings of the qualitative data method in relation to research objectives with the findings of the literature review and discussing the differences between them.

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics such as frequency distribution

## 4. Results and Discussions

### 4.1 Respondents Response Rate

**Table 4.1.1** Showing Respondents Response Rate

S/no	Sample size	Response	Percentage (%)
1	100	81	81%
		19	19%
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Fieldwork

The above table shows the respondents response rate of which the researchers had distributed 100 self-administered questionnaires targeting respondents from both public and private institutions that have considered to be of eminent importance for generating accurate and reliable data of the study, out of which eighty-one questionnaires were returned which account for 81% of the total questionnaire administered which is valid for drawing a scientific conclusion.

#### 4.2.1 Age of Respondents

**Table 4.2.1** Showing Age of Respondents

S/no	Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	18 – 25	21	26%
2	26 – 31	41	51%
3	32 – 39	14	17%
4	40 and above	5	6%
<b>Total</b>		<b>81</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Fieldwork

table and percentages using a computer package of SPSS version 2.1 as it helps in processing quantitative data.

### 3.10 Ethical Considerations

The researcher identified himself to the respondents and inform the respondents about the importance of the study. The major ethical issue in this study is the privacy and confidentiality of the information respondents given. Another issue that were considered in this study is the right of participants to participate in the study. The respondents were given freedom to ignore items that they do not wish to respond to; the participants in this study have the right to remain anonymous that their individual identities are not salient features in the study. The participants remained anonymous throughout the study – even to the researchers.

Related to the issue of voluntary participation, is the issue of informed consent. The participants were fully informed about the procedures involved in this study and give their consent to participate. Participants were assured that the information they gave were not made available to anyone who is not directly in the study.

### 4.2 Democratic Data of the Response

This section presents the demographic background of the respondents of the study with a special reference to their age, gender, level of education, working institution, years of working experience and their political party affiliation.

The above table shows the age categories of the respondents that participated in the study. The large proportion of the age of respondents fall under 26-31 (41) with an average of 51%, those who aged at 18-25 were only 21 which is 26%, those fall under 32-39 was solitary 14 which is 17%, whilst 40 and above was only 5 which is 6%. Therefore, this study had

#### 4.2.2 Gender of Respondents

**Table 4.2.2** Showing Gender of Respondents

S/no	Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Male	67	83%
2	Female	14	17%
3	Others	-	-
Total		81	100%

*Source: Fieldwork*

The above table presents the gender distribution of the respondents and it has shown that, the large fraction of the respondents in this study is male (67) with an average of 83% while female (14) was only rated at 17% which is a small proportion and others category

#### 4.2.3 Level of Education of Respondents

**Table 4.2.3** Showing Level of Education of Respondents

S/no	Education	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Secondary School	2	2%
2	College	25	31%
3	University	51	63%
4	Others	3	4%
Total		81	100%

*Source: Fieldwork*

The above table summarizes the educational level of the respondents in this study. It shows that most of the respondents were University graduates (51) rated at 63%, while respondents finished from College were (25) captured a rate of 31% and 3 from others

#### 4.2.4 Working Institution of Respondents

**Table 4.2.4** Showing working institution of respondents

S/no	Institution	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Academics	25	31%
2	Government	43	53%
3	NGO's	9	11%
4	Others	4	5%
Total		81	100%

*Source: Fieldwork*

The above table precises the working institution of the respondents in this study. It shows that most of the respondents were working with the government (43) rated at 53%, followed by respondents from the Academia (25) captured the rate of 31% and 9 respondents from the Nongovernmental Organizations

confirmed the respondents as of youthful and middle age and hence, it has been of great importance due to the fact that, there is wisdom in age and met the researcher expectations of such aged group to have acquainted with the trends of peace agreements and armed conflict in South Sudan.

captured 0%. Therefore, this study had confirmed that, male had active contribution in this study weigh against the female which is less and thus, there is a clear gender disparity.

category with 4% of the total percentage where the Secondary level is 2 and scored 2%. Therefore, this study had confirmed the active participation by the most qualified and educated respondents.

with 11% of the total percentage where the others category is 4, scored 5%. Therefore, this study had confirmed the active participation by the most of the government employees which is of vital impact on the nature of the study due to the fact that, government is the key actor of the peace process in South Sudan.

#### 4.2.5 Years of Working Experience of Respondents

**Table 4.2.5** Showing Years of Working Experience of Respondents

S/no	Years	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	1 – 3	16	20%
2	4 - 6	49	60%
3	7 - 9	13	16%
4	10 and above	3	4%
<b>Total</b>		<b>81</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Source: Fieldwork*

The above table precises the working institution of the respondents in this study. It shows that most of the respondents were working with the government (43) rated at 53%, followed by respondents from the Academia (25) captured the rate of 31% and 9 respondents from the Nongovernmental Organizations

#### 4.2.6 Political Party Affiliation

**Table 4.2.6** Showing Political Party of Respondents

S/no	Political Party	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	SPLM	37	46%
2	UDF	5	6%
3	SPLM – IO	10	12%
4	Others	29	36%
Total		81	100%

*Source: Fieldwork*

The above table recapitulates the years of working experience of the respondents in this study. It shows that most of the respondents were having a working experience of 4 – 6 years (49) rated at 60%, while respondents with 1 – 3 years of working experience is (16) captured the rate of 20% and 7 – 9 years' category is (13) with 16% of the total percentage where 10 and above category is (3) scored 4%. Therefore, this study had confirmed the active participation by the most qualified respondents given the virtue of their respective working institutions.

The above table condenses the political party affiliation of the respondents in this study. It shows that most of the respondents from the SPLM Party (37) rated at 46%, while respondents from various parties were (29) captured the rate of 36% and SPLM-IO (10) with 12% of the total percentage where UDF (5) scored 6%. Therefore, this study had confirmed that, majority of the respondents of the study were from the SPLM party, followed by other political parties; with SPLM-IO which cemented the nature of the study due to the fact that, members drawn from these parties were mostly the main signatories to the peace agreements process given the recalcitrant position of the armed conflicts in South Sudan.

with 11% of the total percentage where the others category is 4, scored 5%. Therefore, this study had confirmed the active participation by the most of the government employees which is of vital impact on the nature of the study due to the fact that, government is the key actor of the peace process in South Sudan.

### 4.3 Challenges facing Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS)

#### 4.3.1 Reasons for Deferral of Security Sector Reform

Based on the findings, most of the respondents have largely attributed the delay in the security sector reform on the lack of political will by the parties to the agreement to unified the army and made their graduation possible citing more division or defection of armies from one command to another causing a national security threat. The findings have also attributed the delay on lack of funds to provide the armies with the necessary uniform and equipment citing the sanctions on the supply of the ammunitions by the international community on the Revitalized-Transitional Government of National Unity in general and some targeted individuals from the army sector in particular.

#### 4.3.2 Effects of Untimely Formation of R-TGoNU

Based on the findings of the study, the untimely formation of the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity have left most of the provisions of the Revitalized peace agreements 2018 unresolved that almost derailing the stand of the peace agreement.

Most of the respondents 51% have placed largely the effect of untimely formation of the Revitalized-Transitional Government of National Unity on the implementation of the peace agreements centered on the lack of realization of the Security sector reform where the expected unified army were held in cantonment areas without shelter, health care or food.

Other responses from the respondents 23% of the study have centered the effect of untimely formation of the Revitalized- Transitional Government of National Unity on the implementation of the revitalized peace

agreement have crippled the formation of commission for truth, reconciliation and healing that aims at bringing the actors involved in the armed conflicts to face Justice and creates hope for the victims. Other responses from the respondents 7% of the study have centered the effect of untimely formation of the Revitalized- Transitional Government of National Unity on the implementation of the revitalized peace agreement on the basis that, it has created a power vacuum at the State/local levels that fertile way for peace spoilers fueling local tensions citing the absence of the state government on the ground.

#### 4.4 Factors Underpinning Armed Conflicts in South Sudan

**Table 4.4** Showing Factors Underpinning Armed Conflicts in South Sudan

S/ No	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree	Disagree
1	Ethnic identity help underpins armed conflicts in South Sudan.	19.7%	9.8%	24.6%	18.5%	27.1%
2	Corruption driven South Sudan into armed conflicts.	48.1%	13.5%	9.8%	12.3%	16.0%
3	Proliferation of small arms led to the outbreak of the armed conflicts in South Sudan.	28.3%	38.2%	4.9%	12.3%	16.0%
4	Power struggle between the political elites caused South Sudan to faced armed conflicts.	50.6%	28.3%	1.2%	17.2%	2.4%
5	Historical legacies and hatred between communities have driven South Sudan into armed conflicts.	23.4%	32.0%	13.5%	19.7%	11.1%
6	Lack of professionalism in the army caused the outbreak of armed conflicts in South Sudan.	53.0%	12.3%	9.8%	20.9%	3.7%
7	Ethnic based-political Parties with no ideology have caused armed conflicts in South Sudan.	8.6%	22.2%	37.0%	23.4%	8.6%
8	Militarization of politics and politicization of military have led to the outbreak of armed conflicts in South Sudan.	55.5%	13.5%	6.1%	14.8%	9.8%
9	Economic crisis have led to the outbreak of armed conflicts in South Sudan.	11.1%	3.7%	17.2%	43.2%	24.6%
10	Greed and grievances have forced South Sudan to experienced armed conflicts.	25.9%	40.7%	7.4%	19.7%	6.1%

Source: Fieldwork

This result, had largely placed the factors underpinning armed conflicts in South Sudan on the power struggle between the country’ political elites where 41 respondents 50.6% strongly agreed and 23 respondents 28.3% agreed. It had also acknowledged that militarization of politics and politicization of military have led to the outbreak of armed conflicts

in South Sudan where 45 respondents 55.5% strongly agreed and 11 respondents 13.5% agreed.

The result had also attributed the factors underneath armed conflicts in South Sudan to the Proliferation of small arms in the hands of civilians and followed by Greed and grievances where the former 23 respondents

28.3% strongly agreed and 31 respondents 38.2% agreed whilst the latter 21 respondents 25.9% strongly agreed and 33 respondents 40.7% agreed respectively. Another factor which has positive correlation with the forces underpinning armed conflicts in South Sudan is the lack of professionalism in the national army where 43 respondents 53.0% strongly agreed and 10 respondents 12.3% agreed.

The result had also shown that the prevailing malpractice (corruption) had significantly buttressed armed conflicts in South Sudan with 39 respondents 48.1% strongly agreed and 11 respondents

13.5% agreed. The factors supporting armed conflict in South Sudan is also linked to the historical legacies and hatred between communities which is minor

**4.5 External Perspective on the Causes of Armed Conflicts in South Sudan**

S/n	Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Yes	3	3.7%
2	No	14	17.3%
3	Unanswered/vacant	64	79%
<b>Total</b>		<b>81</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: *Fieldwork*

**4.5.1 Reasons for External Causes**

Based on the findings of the study, it has been found that, South Sudan armed conflicts was externally motivated based on the Sudan interests to destabilized South Sudan following its independence in July 2011 citing the strong relations of SPLM/A- North with the South Sudan fighting the government in Khartoum where only 3 respondents 3.7% thought so. Meanwhile, 14 respondents 17.3% had agreed that, South Sudan armed conflicts was not externally driven but domestically engineered citing the genesis of the armed conflicts as a power struggle between the leaders of the country. While majority of the respondents 64 (78%) remained skeptical on the external nature of the armed conflicts in South Sudan.

**4.6 Critical Analysis of the Findings**

**4.6.1 Challenges Facing Revitalized Agreement on Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS).**

Based on the findings, most of the respondents have largely attributed the delay in the security sector reform on the lack of political will by the parties to the agreement to unified the army and made their graduation possible citing more division or defection of armies from one command to another causing a national security threat. The findings have also attributed the delay on lack of funds to provide the

and of trivial effect where 19 respondents 23.4% strongly agreed and 26 respondents 32.0% only agreed. Based on the findings of the study factor such as economic crisis that have engulfed South Sudan does not contribute positively to the outbreak of the armed conflicts in the country where 35 respondents 43.2% strongly disagreed and 20 respondents 24.6% disagreed, whereas ethnic identity in the country does not played a significant role in running the country into the armed conflicts where 15 respondents 18.5% strongly disagreed and 22 respondents 27.1% disagreed. Whereas 30 respondents 37.0% does not believed or have no idea (neutral) that ethnic-based political parties with no ideology have caused the armed conflicts that South Sudan experienced since the genesis of the conflicts in December 2013.

armies with the necessary uniform and equipment citing the sanctions on the supply of the ammunition by the international community on the Revitalized-Transitional Government of National Unity in general and some targeted individuals from the army sector in particular.

This finding confirmed a conclusion by Craze (2019) that, the Security Sector Reform process was characterized by a weak centralized regime that attempted to maintain its power by proliferating rentier relationships in which resources were reallocated to potential violent forces on the ground, undermining the army as a coherent institution (Craze, 2019).

A failure to understand the political economy of the security sector in South Sudan meant that the international community failed to take seriously the real reasons that the SPLA would resist the implementation of international schemes of SSR, or else subvert them to their own ends; for instance, training schemes, with their free lunches, per diems, and the veneer of legitimacy they brought, were welcomed (Ibid). According to the R-ARCSS, the belligerent parties were to assemble at cantonment sites (SSOA and the SPLA-IO) or barracks (the SSPDF) prior to joining training sites for the new national army. Just as with the overall SSR architecture of the R-ARCSS, the cantonment process itself was cloaked in productive

ambiguity (R-JMEC Report, 2019, Accessed on 19<sup>th</sup> /1/2022).

According to the South Sudanese authorities, the country's military forces currently have approximately 350,000 troops. Since independence, the security sector has been at the Centre of the State apparatus and has consumed the bulk of the country's resources and official budget; in the 2019/2020 budget, 13 per cent of government expenditure was earmarked for security, while critical services for the population received declining shares of the budget (UNDP, 2017). Education was allocated 5.6 per cent, health care 1.1 per cent and rural development 0.7 per cent, representatives of think tanks and non-governmental organizations noted that, in reality, a much higher level of funds is spent on security than is captured in the official budget. The size of the security sector itself is a challenge, because the costs of maintaining the current military are unsustainable (Wells, 2017). Chapter II of the Revitalized Peace Agreement prohibits the recruitment and training of new forces by the signatories and outlines a process by which troops are to be assembled in cantonment sites within 30 days of the signing of the Agreement, screened for eligibility and demobilized or retrained as part of necessary unified forces within eight months (Vertin, 2018). Despite those provisions, the review team noted that parties to the conflict have continued to recruit new troops, with unrealistic promises of eventual incorporation into the formal security sector; those actions have included the forced recruitment of youths because the size of the military factions was not certified at the start, the security sector reform process thus far has exacerbated the problem of the oversized security apparatus (Ibid).

In violation of the Revitalized Peace Agreement, troops assembled in cantonment sites have not received adequate food, shelter and access to medical care. Conditions in cantonment sites and training centers are, reportedly, especially adverse for women. Most troops have never gone into cantonment sites, and of those that have, many abandoned the sites because of those conditions, stalling progress on security sector reform (Boswell, 2019). The South Sudanese authorities recognized that those troops who were moved from cantonment sites to training sites had not been properly vetted; more than two years after the signing of the Agreement, no unified forces have been graduated or deployed. Officials of the South Sudanese Government attributed the delays to a lack of external funding for the security sector reform

process and a lack of weapons for newly trained troops (Johnson, 2020). Since the demobilization of the combatants and the reform of military, police and intelligence institutions directly affects the security of the signatories of a peace agreement and the state, these mechanisms are highly sensitive (UNDP, 2020).

The absence of coherent strategies and processes for security sector reform and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration in South Sudan is a significant driver of insecurity. Security forces, including new recruits, often go unpaid for months at a time and survive by looting the civilian population and extorting money at checkpoint; however, because of delays in implementing the commitments on security sector reform outlined in the Revitalized Peace Agreement and the failure of the Government to commit funds to that undertaking, donors lack confidence in the process and have been reluctant to provide funding (World Peace Foundation, 2018).

#### ***4.6.2 Factors Underpinning Armed Conflicts in South Sudan***

This result, had largely placed the factors underpinning armed conflicts in South Sudan on the power struggle between the country's political elites where 41 respondents 50.6% strongly agreed and 23 respondents 28.3% agreed and thus, this finding had confirmed the conclusion by Tenabe (2018), that, the civil war in South Sudan which broke out in December 2013, originated in the power struggle within SPLM in view of the elections planned for 2015. The situation of power struggle deteriorated in 2013 when Vice President Riek Machar criticized President Kiir openly and declared his intention to challenge for the leadership position of SPLM at SPLM's third extraordinary convention scheduled to be held in May 2013. Rebecca Nyandeng and Pagan Amum also shown their intention of running for political position of which the tensions became more violent when President Kiir dismissed Vice President Riek and the entire cabinet members without any official reason in July 2013 and the tension culminated into the December 2013 crisis (Brosche and Hوجلung, 2016).

This result had also acknowledged that militarization of politics and politicization of military have led to the outbreak of armed conflicts in South Sudan where 45 respondents 55.5% strongly agreed and 11 respondents 13.5% agreed. Thus, this finding had confirmed the work of (Nyadera, 2018) that, complex military-politics relations in South Sudan are visible

and cause a hindrance to peace. There have been strong affiliations between soldiers and political elites, specially from their ethnic groups, to whom they seem to pay more allegiance than to the state (Ibid.). where (Roland Sen and Kindersley, 2017), argued that, this complex relationship is not new and began long ago, during and after the struggle for independence. The ever military influence in state affairs has been further supported by the laxity of the previous peace agreements to accommodate non-state actors in the transitional period and to train ethnic militias adopted into the national army where both government and opposition military forces hold extreme positions where the latter calling for the removal of the president (Tenabe, 2018). The result had also attributed the factors underneath armed conflicts in South Sudan to the Proliferation of small arms in the hands of civilians and followed by Greed and grievances where the former 23 respondents 28.3% strongly agreed and 31 respondents 38.2% agreed whilst the latter 21 respondents 25.9% strongly agreed and 33 respondents 40.7% agreed respectively.

The proliferation of the small arms in the hands of the citizens as according to (O'Brien, 2009) has been the failure of the government to recognize the importance of complete disarmament of the civilians at the very stage of the independence. These arms have no doubt played a crucial role in the continuation and escalation of the armed conflict, since not only the security agencies had access to arms, but civilians were able to keep the arms they used to fight for independence and thus, challenge the state's monopoly on the use of force (Ibid.) For example, there was a proliferation of arms among the civilians who formed well-organized groups where Dinka had the 'Titweng' (a local militia), the Nuer had the 'White Army' that was originally formed to protect the cattle but upon gaining widespread success in their raids became an important asset in the political sphere (Young, 2016). The result had also shown that the prevailing malpractice (corruption) had significantly buttressed armed conflicts in South Sudan with 39 respondents 48.1% strongly agreed and 11 respondents 13.5% agreed. As argued by (De Waal, 2014), South Sudan has been dominated by rotating set of elites who move seamlessly between positions in government and the frontlines of the rebellion, as political situations change (De Waal, 2014).

As in July 2013, President Kiir restructured his entire cabinet, removing prominent elites, such as Vice President Riek and sacking a group of ethnically diverse cabinet Ministers and high-level

officials accusing them of corruption, where most of these individuals had played a leading roles in the country's economic and political decisions in the post-independence era, and after being pushed out of the government, many joined a political resistance bloc that soon developed into an armed opposition (Lunn, 2016). The factors supporting armed conflict in South Sudan is also linked to the historical legacies and hatred between communities which is minor and of trivial effect where 19 respondents 23.4% strongly agreed and 26 respondents 32.0% only agreed.

This finding has confirmed the conclusion by Mazrui (2008) that, "the most clashes in some piece of Northern Africa are religious and the most exceedingly bad clashes in Black Africa are historical ethnic based tensions" (Mazrui, 2008). As indicated by Dessaleg (2017) "the idea of ethnicity by and large in Africa and South Sudan precisely is a shared characteristic right now. It very well may be conjured to guard political, social and social positions since it conveys specialist, past judiciousness, inclination or decision". Essentially, ethnicity can be an instrument of socio-political assembly and can likewise rouse sorted out brutality and political instability. Confusion of political structures identifying with ethnic ground has been a striking backer of the power battle among the South Sudanese people group", As signposted by Ken and Wilson (1996) cited in Jacob, (2012), these elites will look to get extraordinary political power and financial aspects benefits for their gatherings (themselves) instead of looking for ... solidarity of individuals.

While a great part of the contention is political, there are additionally ethnic drivers to the raising savagery and the two are frequently hard to recognize, for example; Dinka and Nuer ethnic characters were intentionally politicized amid the second considerate war, and mobilized structures inside networks, for example, the Gelweng, Titweng and White Army Bunam (International Crisis Group, 2014, Accessed on 10<sup>th</sup>/1/2022). The polarization and equipping of networks along ethnic lines in this contention, and the control by the incredible elites are a key factor that hazards a quickly profound and wide war with genuine of provincial big-hearted and political outcomes (South Sudan Protection Cluster, 2014, Accessed on 10<sup>th</sup>/1/2022). Based on the findings of the study factor such as economic crisis that have engulfed South Sudan does not contribute positively to the outbreak of the armed conflicts in the country where 35 respondents 43.2% strongly disagreed and

20 respondents 24.6% disagreed, whereas traditional distinctiveness in the country does not played a significant role in running the country into the armed conflicts where 15 respondents 18.5% strongly disagreed and 22 respondents 27.1% disagreed. Whereas 30 respondents 37.0% does not believed or have no idea (neutral) that ethnic-based political parties with no ideology have caused the armed conflicts that South Sudan experienced since the genesis of the conflicts in December 2013.

## 5. Conclusions

This study had concluded that, the undermined political-economy of the security sector reform had been a stumbling block for the implementation of Revitalized Peace Agreement in South Sudan resulted from lack of adherence to political will by the parties to implement the agreements in letter and spirit; and hence, the power struggle, the militarization of politics and politicization of military and proliferations of the small arms have been the underlined factors underpinning armed conflicts in South Sudan.

## 6. Recommendations

Based on the findings, this study recommended the following mechanisms as tools that could help and assuage the risks of the vice/armed conflicts from becoming banal in terms of least efforts by the parties to the conflicts in implementing the provisions of the Revitalized Agreement on Resolution of Conflicts in South Sudan 2018.

### *-Observance to Political will*

The parties to the peace agreements should honestly translate the political will in implementing the Revitalized peace agreements in letter and spirit as this would curtail the risk of the armed conflicts in the country from becoming nemesis in terms of returning country back to war.

### *-Funding of Security Sector*

There is a need for the Transitional Government of National Unity to inject or allocate more resources for the security sector reform which can help defuse the challenges facing the country in implementing and transforming the security sector by immediate graduation of the unified forces under one central command as this would give peace a chance from unnecessary defections of armies from one command to another.

### *-Conduct of Timely Election*

There is a need for the timely election to be conducted

for the citizens to choose the leadership of the country by ensuring peaceful, free, fair, credible polls that reflect the will of the people by putting in place permanent constitution and repatriation of refugees and the conduct of the national population census thereafter.

### *-Separation between Military and Politics*

There should be a clear line between military and politics as many military personnel are attached and loyal to the political individuals rather than the country by reforming the existing recalcitrant institutions as this would avoid the mistake of December 2013 and July 2016 incidents that claimed hundreds of lives of the nationals

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