

# Japan's international peace operations in South Sudan: Peacekeeping and civilian protection dilemmas

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## **Abstract**

After the independence of South Sudan from Sudan on 9 July 2011, the Japanese government decided to dispatch its Self-Defence Forces (SDF) to South Sudan under the auspices of the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS). Despite the post-conflict military clashes in South Sudan, the Japanese government did not withdraw the SDF, but instead, the Abe administration assigned a new mission, the so-called '*kaketsuke-keigo*' ('rush and rescue'), to rescue staff of international organisations and non-governmental organisations (NGO) in preparation for possible armed attacks during peacekeeping operations. The new mission can be regarded as Prime Minister Abe's 'proactive contribution to peace' (proactive pacifism) in action, and the policy is congruous with the purpose of 'human security' and 'protection of civilians'. This paper aims to investigate Japan's contribution to peacekeeping operations in South

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Sudan and examine associated dilemmas facing the United Nations, the Japanese government, and the Japanese peacekeepers in UNMISS – which need to be overcome for future international peace operations.

**Keywords:** Japanese government, *kaketsuke-keigo*, Peace and Security Legislation, peacekeeping operations (PKOs), protection of civilians (POC), United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS)

## Introduction

This paper examines Japan's contribution to the international peacekeeping operations (PKO) in South Sudan. Since the enactment of the Act on Cooperation with United Nations Peacekeeping Operations and Other Operations, or the so-called 'PKO Law', in 1992, the Japanese government has contributed to a range of international peace operations authorised or supported by the United Nations. After the independence of South Sudan from Sudan on 9 July 2011, Japan under the reign of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) administration decided to dispatch its Self-Defence Forces (SDF) to South Sudan with the stated goal of peacekeeping and nation-building of the newest country in the world under the auspices of the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) (MOFA 2011a).

The security situation in South Sudan has not always been stable, and military clashes have sporadically erupted from time to time. Despite the outbreak of military clashes, especially the occurrence of violence in Juba in July 2016, the Japanese government led by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe did not withdraw the SDF, but instead, assigned a new mission, the so-called '*kaketsuke-keigo*' ('rush and rescue') to rescue staff of international organisations or non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in case of possible armed attacks during peacekeeping operations. The addition of the new mission was based on the Peace and Security Legislation enacted by the Abe government in September 2015.

This article attempts to analyse and shed light on the notions of 'human security', 'protection of civilians' (POC), and '*kaketsuke-keigo*' as key analytical concepts. The concept of 'human security' was proposed by

the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 1994, and the Japanese government has promoted the realisation of the concept as one of the diplomatic pillars. The human security concept embraces two types of freedom: 'freedom from want' and 'freedom from fear'. The Japanese government has contributed to human security of post-conflict countries through financial contribution (freedom from want) and peacekeeping operations (freedom from fear) (e.g. Akimoto 2013).

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) currently tends to authorise 'use of force' in terms of 'responsibility to protect' (R2P) and POC in peacekeeping operations. The R2P mandate is regarded as one of 'the most significant normative advances' of UNPKO (Thakur 2007), and the POC mandate is connected with the R2P concept. It is noteworthy that 'use of force' based on the POC mandate has been authorised by the UNSC in almost all of the recent peacekeeping operations in Africa (Shinoda 2012:15; Inoue 2012:72–73). Nevertheless, it seems that the POC mandates are 'extremely challenging' and difficult to implement in the military operations (Breidlid and Lie 2011; Willmot 2016). It was with regard to the POC mandate that the Abe government decided to send a *kaketsuke-keigo* mission to South Sudan.

This paper focuses on dilemmas in the peacekeeping operations in South Sudan in relation with the POC mandate. To this end, this research conducts an analysis of the complicated dilemmas at three levels, 1) international, 2) national, and 3) individual, originally proposed as an analytical framework to examine causes of war (Waltz 2001). In an application of the three-level perspectives, this article seeks to analyse endeavours as well as dilemmas of the United Nations, the Japanese government, and the Japanese peacekeepers in the UNMISS operation by examining official Japanese government documents, Japanese and international newspapers, and on-site reports by Japanese peacekeepers.

Accordingly, this article begins with Japan's response to the peacekeeping operations in South Sudan. From an 'international-level' perspective, peacekeeping and civilian protection dilemmas, which the United Nations

has been faced with, will be examined in relation to Japan's policy on UNMISS. From a 'national-level' perspective, the domestic debate on the new mission, *kaketsuke-keigo*, will be discussed with a focus on the political dilemmas of the Japanese government. From an 'individual-level' perspective, this paper analyses personal dilemmas of the Japanese peacekeepers in UNMISS by examining on-site experience and daily reports by the Japanese peacekeepers. Finally, it will consider the implication of Prime Minister Abe's 'proactive contribution to peace' for Japan's peacekeeping operations in South Sudan for the purpose of overcoming the three-level dilemmas for future international peacekeeping operations.

### **The DPJ Government and peacekeeping operations in South Sudan, 2011–2012**

Japan's commitment to peacekeeping operations in South Sudan dates back to the period of the DPJ government (September 2009 – December 2012). In a meeting with Prime Minister Naoto Kan on 8 August 2011, UN Secretary-General (UNSG) Ban Ki-moon stated that the United Nations expected Japan to contribute to UNMISS. In response, during his meeting with the UNSG on 21 September 2011, Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda, successor to Prime Minister Kan, mentioned that the Japanese government intended to support UNMISS. Moreover, Prime Minister Noda delivered a speech at the UN General Assembly and stated that Japan planned to dispatch the SDF to UNMISS after the investigation in South Sudan. On 15 November 2011, the DPJ government decided to dispatch two SDF personnel to UNMISS as staff officers. It was decided that the unarmed Japanese staff officers would work as a logistic officer at the logistics planning office and a database manager in the joint mission analysis centre at the UNMISS headquarters (MOFA 2011b).

Based on the Cabinet decision of 11 November 2011, two staff officers were dispatched to Juba on 28 November 2011. As well as the two staff officers who were already sent to the UNMISS headquarters, the DPJ government decided to send an engineering unit composed of about 330 SDF personnel to UNMISS in order to improve infrastructure, such as maintenance

and repair of roads and buildings. Also, another engineering unit that consisted of 40 SDF personnel was sent to South Sudan, Uganda, and Kenya to support transportation and supply in the areas (MOFA 2011c).

The decision to dispatch the SDF to UNMISS was made on the basis of the ceasefire between Sudan and South Sudan. Nonetheless, on the morning of 26 March 2012, it was reported that military clashes between Sudan and South Sudan had broken out, and military forces of South Sudan occupied a major oil mine in the Heglig area, which is located inside the territory of Sudan. On the next day, the Sudanese government dropped bombs on an oil mine of South Sudan as retaliation. The UNSC, on 27 March 2012, issued a press statement to demand that both Sudan and South Sudan refrain from escalating the military clashes into another full-blown military conflict. On 28 March 2012, the DPJ government expressed its concern about the 'military clashes' on the border region, and called on both governments to settle the issue by peaceful means (MOFA 2012a). The military clashes indicate that 'oil' was a crucial factor to the border conflict between Sudan and South Sudan (Hamilton 2012).

On 24 April 2012, the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union held a ministerial meeting and issued a Communique on the arrangement which required Sudan and South Sudan to cease their adversarial behaviour within 48 hours with a view to reducing the bilateral military tension. Moreover, the UNSC adopted a resolution based on the PSC Communique demanding the two governments cease hostilities and provocations including bombing, withdraw their armed forces from each other, and start negotiations under the leadership of the African Union on 2 May 2012. The Japanese government expressed its intention to support the PSC statement as well as the UNSC resolution on the next day (MOFA 2012b).

Besides the SDF dispatch, Japan made a financial contribution to the 'human security' of South Sudan. On 13 July 2012, the Japanese government decided to donate US\$ 2.04 million as emergency grant aid in order to support Sudanese refugees who fled to South Sudan as a result of the

deterioration in the humanitarian situation in the southern part of Sudan. The humanitarian aid by the DPJ government was aimed at enhancing living conditions and basic services, such as water, healthcare, and hygiene in cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (MOFA 2012c).

The governments of Sudan and South Sudan decided to withdraw their troops from Abyei and to start negotiations over the issues including oilfields. On 3 September 2012, the Japanese government supported the progress in the negotiations based on the PSC Communique and UNSC Resolution 2046 (MOFA 2012d). At the conclusion of the bilateral negotiations under the auspices of the African Union High Level Implementation Panel, both Sudan and South Sudan signed agreements on security arrangements, oil, and nationality. In response, the DPJ government welcomed the agreements and expressed its support for the peaceful coexistence of the two nations (MOFA 2012e).

Meanwhile, the UNSC adopted Resolution 2057 to renew the mandate of UNMISS for another year, until 15 July 2013. In response to the UNSC resolution, a Cabinet decision was made on 16 October 2012 to extend the term of the SDF dispatch to UNMISS for another year, until 31 October 2013 (MOFA 2012f). Thus, the commitment by the United Nations to the international peacekeeping operations in South Sudan seemed to be active; and Japan under the reign of the DPJ was reactive but, based on its human security diplomacy, cooperative in the international peace operations. As a result of the 2009 general election, the Abe government, a coalition of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and Komeito, replaced the DPJ government, and Japan's commitment to UNMISS became more active than the previous government.

### **The Abe Government and peacekeeping operations in South Sudan, 2013–2014**

Prime Minister Abe's policy of 'proactive contribution to peace' (proactive pacifism) was proposed in the National Security Strategy on 17 December 2013

(Cabinet Secretariat 2013). The 'proactive contribution to peace' concept is basically consistent with the 'human security' policy, and further developed Japan's commitment to human security and peacekeeping operations in South Sudan. On the basis of its 'proactive contribution to peace' policy, the Abe government supported a decision by the Human Security Trust Fund to extend its financial assistance for South Sudan to US\$ 321 000 in total as part of a project entitled, 'Human Security in Africa: Assessment and Capacity Building to Promote Sustainable Peace and Development'. The project was designed to resolve 'human security issues', such as conflicts, poverty, environmental degradation, health problems, and involuntary resettlements (MOFA 2013a).

On 31 May 2013, Abe had official talks with South Sudan President Salva Kiir, who visited Japan to attend the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD), in Yokohama. President Kiir expressed his expectations for Japan's contribution to infrastructure building and human resources development, and the prime minister stated that Japan would expand its peace operations to these fields and to the states of the Eastern and Western Equatoria (MOFA 2013b). The Abe-Kiir talks in TICAD exemplifies the prime minister's 'proactive contribution to peace' diplomacy.

On 22 October 2013, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan announced that Hilde Johnson, Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the Republic of South Sudan and the Head of UNMISS, would visit Japan from 26 to 31 October. The main purpose of Johnson's visit was to inspect the training of the SDF in preparation for peacekeeping operations in UNMISS. In response to the visit, the Abe government expressed its willingness to continue its 'proactive contributions toward the achievement of peace and stability' in South Sudan (MOFA 2013c).

On 15 December 2013 however, the security situation in South Sudan deteriorated due to military clashes between military forces of South Sudan and military groups loyal to former Vice-President Riek Machar, who was discharged by the President in July of that year. On 17 December 2013,

the government forces attacked the residence of the former Vice-President and detained some ministers and related suspects. From 4 January 2014, negotiation for a peace process was started by conflict parties in Addis Ababa, and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) proposed an agreement to cease adversarial conducts by the parties. The number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) amounted to some 923 000 by the end of April 2014. In this context, Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida organised a ‘ministerial meeting’ to resolve the South Sudan issues on 4 May 2014. Moreover, the foreign minister sent a message that the Abe government supported an agreement signed by the conflict parties on 9 May, and Japanese peacekeepers would continue its nation-building operations in South Sudan (MOFA 2014a).

In response to the increased number of IDPs in South Sudan, the Abe government decided to extend a donation of US\$ 12 million as ‘emergency grant aid’ through the World Food Programme, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), UNHCR, the International Organisation for Migration, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Thus, the Abe administration made a financial contribution to ‘human security’ of South Sudan (freedom from want) in the fields of water, food, sanitation, health and medical care, and shelters as basic human needs of the local people (MOFA 2014b).

On 25 November 2014, UNSC Resolution 2187 was adopted to extend the mandate of UNMISS until 30 May 2015. In response, on 10 February 2015, the Abe government decided to extend the SDF dispatch to UNMISS for about six months until 31 August 2015. The extension of the SDF dispatch to UNMISS required the prime minister to report the change of the mission to the Diet in accordance with Article 7 of the PKO Law (MOFA 2015). Thus, Japan’s contribution to ‘human security’ of South Sudan was made by its ‘financial contribution’ and the peacekeeping operations, mainly ‘engineering activities’ on the basis of Prime Minister Abe’s ‘proactive contribution to peace’ policy.

## **The Abe Government and peacekeeping operations in South Sudan, 2015–2016**

Despite the peacekeeping endeavour of UNMISS, it turned out that the United Nations and its member states failed to prevent military clashes and the humanitarian crisis in South Sudan including widespread killing of civilians and sexual assault. After the outbreak of the military clashes of December 2015, it was reported that serious human rights violations, such as sexual assault in refugee camps, continuously occurred, and the refugee camps were described as the 'rape camps' of South Sudan (AFP 2015). The Human Rights Watch noted in its annual report that they witnessed attacks on civilians, use of child soldiers, arbitrary detentions, torture, and enforced disappearances in 2015, while freedom of expression was violated in the country (Human Rights Watch 2016). Still, the Abe government decided to extend the SDF dispatch to UNMISS for international peace cooperation to 31 October 2016 (MOFA 2016a).

On the night of 8 July 2016, fighting erupted between troops on the side of President Salva Kiir and soldiers loyal to former Vice-President Riek Machar occurred in Juba, near the Parliament of South Sudan. It was reported that at least 272 people died in three days of military clashes between the two armed groups. Control of the army of South Sudan was fragmented along ethnic lines, and it was difficult to integrate the various disparate ethnically-dominated factions into a more unified and cooperative national army due to ethnic confrontation. Especially after President Kiir fired former Vice-President Machar in July 2013, it became almost impossible for the two dominant ethnic groups, Dinka and Nuer, to unite their troops (Yomiuri Shimbun Chokan 2016; Japan Times 2016a).

In the crossfire, two Chinese peacekeepers tasked with a POC mandate were killed, and some experts on African studies warned that it would escalate into another civil war. For instance, Clemence Pinaud, Assistant Professor of Indiana University, observed: 'We most likely witnessed an acceleration ... into a full-on war in Juba between the two parties' (Japan Times 2016c). Meanwhile, the UNSC demanded that Kiir and Machar 'rein

in their forces and end the fighting’, and shortly thereafter, the two leaders ordered their soldiers to cease hostilities (Japan Times 2016c).

In response to the worsened security situation, the Abe government decided to evacuate Japanese nationals from South Sudan. To this end, three Japanese Air Self-Defence Force (ASDF) C-130 transport planes were dispatched from Komaki Air Base in Aichi Prefecture. The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) also chartered an aeroplane to withdraw the JICA staff from South Sudan. Other Japanese personnel who were in charge of official development assistance (ODA) were transported by C-130 aeroplanes from Juba to Nairobi in Kenya (MOFA 2016b).

In spite of the military clashes, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga stated that: ‘We don’t consider that any armed conflict as defined by the PKO Law has broken out in the operation area of UNMISS’ (Japan Times 2016b, 2016d; MOFA 2016b). Moreover, Defence Minister Gen Nakatani decided not to withdraw the SDF pe

rsonnel from South Sudan, explaining that the situation was ‘not one that should be classified as an armed conflict’ and that no direct attack against the seventh division dispatched from Chitose Air Base in Hokkaido was conducted (Japan Times 2016d).

On 17 July 2016, *The Japan Times* described the security situation of South Sudan as ‘the anarchy of war’. The United Nations announced that the ‘war-torn nation’ was in danger of a ‘hunger catastrophe’, and the World Food Program also warned that the ‘latest conflict is going to push even more people into hunger and despair’ (Japan Times 2016e). Although Defence Minister Nakatani stated that the situation in South Sudan did not ‘fall under the category of armed conflict’ in terms of the PKO Law, as both conflict groups stopped their skirmishes, the report by *The Japan Times* noted that order within the country ‘has yet to be restored, with fighters reportedly engaging in looting’ (Japan Times 2016f).

Among the military assaults in 2016, the rampage in the Terrain Hotel in Juba on 11 July was the most problematic incident for the United Nations

in terms of the POC mandate. Despite the occurrence of violence in the capital city of South Sudan, the United Nations was not able to crack down on the military clashes, and it was reported that the UN peacekeepers 'ignored rape and assault of aid workers' (The Guardian 2016). It was stressed that the South Sudanese soldiers killed a local journalist, targeted aid workers, beat and robbed people, raped several female foreigners, especially Americans. It was also testified that no embassies, including the embassy of the United States, responded to the desperate calls for help. In addition, UN peacekeepers from Ethiopia, China, and Nepal refused to rescue and protect the civilians in Juba (The Guardian 2016).

In order to strengthen the UNMISS mission, the UNSC decided to increase the number of peacekeepers from 12 000 to 17 000 troops, based on UNSC Resolution 2304 adopted on 12 August 2016. Among them, 4 000 troops were planned to be deployed as the 'Regional Protection Force' authorised by Resolution 2304. The establishment of the Regional Protection Force was heralded as a sign that the United Nations was 'finally getting serious about protecting South Sudan's civilians' (Helms 2016; United Nations 2016). However, the incident of the Terrain Hotel simply indicates the dilemma of the POC mandate in UNPKO. Simply put, the 'POC mandate' in international peacekeeping operations is not necessarily successful as with the case of UNMISS. This is the limitation and dilemma of international peace operations authorised by the UNSC.

### **The 'New Mission' of Japanese peacekeepers under the Abe Administration**

In the case of Japan's PKO policy, Japanese peacekeepers were not officially assigned to conduct such a mission as 'protection of civilians'. The Japanese peacekeepers in UNMISS stayed in a safe area, and therefore, did not conduct the POC mandate. Yet, UNSG Special Representative Hilde Johnson complained that 'the SDF cannot be deployed to dangerous zones, while Koreans are dispatched to unstable areas such as Jonglei' in July 2013 (Fukushima 2014). Indeed, the security situation in Jonglei was unstable (Bredlid and Lie 2011), and the Japanese government decided to dispatch

the SDF to Juba without the POC mission. Still, the 2015 Peace and Security Legislation legitimatised a new rescue mission of the SDF for civilians in peacekeeping operations. On 15 November 2016, the Abe government made a Cabinet decision to dispatch the eleventh contingent of the SDF engineering unit with the new mission to South Sudan. In accordance with the Cabinet decision, the SDF personnel were officially allowed to conduct *kaketsuke-keigo* missions to help UN or NGO staff under attack in the midst of peace operations in South Sudan (Mainichi Shimbun 2016a).

In the light of Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution which forbids ‘use of force’ in international conflict resolution, it was considered that the new mission, *kaketsuke-keigo*, could be regarded as ‘unconstitutional’, if the SDF ends up in directing weapons against ‘a state or quasi-state organization’ (Advisory Panel on Reconstruction of the Legal Basis for Security 2014). To legitimatise the new mission, the Abe government enacted the Peace and Security Legislation. In addition, the concept of ‘*kaketsuke-keigo*’ technically includes not only the ‘protection of civilians’, but also the protection of ‘foreign soldiers’ in the same peacekeeping operations in a broader sense (e.g. Akimoto 2016).

Although the expansion of peacekeeping missions by the SDF aroused public concerns, the Abe government argued that it made sure that ‘appropriate limits are in place’ (Japan Times 2016g). Indeed, as a coalition partner of the LDP, Komeito, a pacifist political party supported by a Buddhist organization, contended that the new mission was designed to rescue those defined as ‘civilians’ such as UN personnel and NGO staff working in South Sudan, but not to protect those defined as ‘soldiers’ of other countries that can defend themselves in principle. Natsuo Yamaguchi as Chief Representative of Komeito argued that Japan’s contribution should be based on the ‘Five Principles’ of Japan’s PKO participation: 1) ‘ceasefire’ between conflict parties, 2) ‘acceptance’ by the conflict parties, 3) ‘neutrality’, 4) ‘withdrawal’ when the three conditions are not met, and 5) ‘minimum necessary use of weapons’. Yamaguchi also highlighted that even if the Five Principles are satisfied, the Japanese government should

withdraw the SDF in case of the degradation of security in South Sudan (Komei Shimbun 2016).

Thus, the dilemma of the Japanese government stems from the relationship between Article 9 of the Constitution and the *kaketsuke-keigo* mission related to the POC mandate in the UNMISS operation. Even after the addition of the new mission, however, the Japanese peacekeepers were and remained unable to conduct the *kaketsuke-keigo* activities for other peacekeepers. In addition to the issue of the new mission, Defence Minister Tomomi Inada was forced to resign from the Cabinet on 27 July 2017 due to 'allegations of a cover-up of SDF's South Sudan mission logs' (Japan Times 2017b). The resignation of the defence minister symbolises the national-level dilemma regarding Japan's commitment to the UN peacekeeping operations in South Sudan. Simply put, the national-level dilemma was caused by constitutional limitations on the SDF, which is not a formal military organisation.

### **Individual dilemmas of the Japanese Peacekeepers in South Sudan**

As with the case of the national-level dilemma, it can be argued that the SDF members were faced with individual-level dilemmas. As examined before, the Japanese peacekeepers could have been forced to make a decision to direct fire against those who intended to attack them during the UNMISS operation. Regarding this issue, Shigeru Suzuki pointed out that overseas missions would increase the mental burden on SDF personnel even in post-conflict peace operations (Suzuki 2015:111). In fact, it has been reported that 56 SDF members, who were sent to post-war international missions in Iraq and the Indian Ocean, committed suicide after the overseas dispatch (NHK 2015).

With the addition of the new mission mandate, Japanese peacekeepers conducted special training in the use weapons and brought wearable cameras on their helmets in order to prove that their shootings were legally justifiable (Mainichi Shimbun 2016c). Nevertheless, if a Japanese

peacekeeper kills a civilian by mistake, ‘there are no rules to punish him for committing the crime of professional negligence ... leaving him in legal limbo’ (Mainichi Shimbun 2016c). This was the most serious individual-level dilemma of Japanese peacekeepers with the *kaketsuke-keigo* mission in South Sudan.

On 19 November 2016, SDF personnel as the eleventh contingent conducted a kick-off ceremony in Aomori City prior to the dispatch to South Sudan. The family members of the SDF, including their children and a wife with a baby, attended the ceremony, but reportedly, mass media were not allowed to report the feelings of the family members paying attention to their ‘mental burden’, and it was reported that there was a ‘tension’ in the atmosphere of the ceremony. On the same day in the city, there was a demonstration opposing the SDF dispatch to South Sudan (Mainichi Shimbun 2016b).

With the addition of the new peacekeeping mission to the SDF in UNMISS, the Ministry of Defence made a decision to increase ‘condolence money’ from 60 million yen to 90 million yen in case Japanese peacekeepers pass away in the line of duty. It was also decided that 8 000 yen as an additional allowance shall be paid to the SDF staff, each time they conduct ‘*kaketsuke-keigo*’ (Asahi Shimbun 2016). Although there were opposing opinions inside the Japanese government arguing that the increase of condolence money might make the public more wary of the risk of the new mission mandate, some official of the Ministry of Defence insisted on the necessity of increasing the allowance explaining that the SDF would conduct risky and dangerous activities in accordance with the new mission (Asahi Shimbun 2016).

In the meanwhile, Japanese peacekeepers in South Sudan may well have faced stressful and difficult missions. For example, a Japanese peacekeeper told a reporter of *Mainichi Shimbun* that the SDF contingents in UNMISS tried to reduce their mental stress by deliberately overturning a table. The Japanese peacekeepers in the UNMISS operation were in a difficult environment where the temperature was over 40°C (Mainichi Shimbun 2012). Captain Takuhiko Hosokawa, who worked as an information staff

officer of UNMISS, noted that 'there are only a few paved roads in Juba. Many of the roads around the city are not surfaced'. As for safety, it was reported that 'there are intertribal conflicts over cows and bordering issues with Sudan', although 'the situation in Juba is stable' (Secretariat of the International Peace Cooperation Headquarters 2012a). Lieutenant Yoshitaka Hashimura described the security situation in Juba as 'improving' and 'stable', and noted that 'I was never put in danger during my three months stay there' in his on-site report in April 2012 (Secretariat of the International Peace Cooperation Headquarters 2012b). Captain Nobuhiro Arai noted the difficulty of the engineering and construction tasks during the rainy season in South Sudan. Due to the heavy rain in the season, the engineering unit needed to reschedule their operations repeatedly (Secretariat of the International Peace Cooperation Headquarters 2012c). Major Yuichiro Koma who worked as a logistics officer in UNMISS noted in his on-site report that there were no 'serious violent crimes' or 'criminal activities' in Juba except for minor offences, such as theft, yet he refrained from walking outside at night and going to the 'off-limits areas' designated by the United Nations (Secretariat of the International Peace Cooperation Headquarters 2012d).

The on-site reports above are public and official statements, but some Japanese peacekeepers might have gone through stressful and traumatic experience during their missions in South Sudan, which might have been left unsaid. According to an interview by *Mainichi Shimbun*, about 20 SDF, who were dispatched to peacekeeping operations in South Sudan and witnessed traumatic scenes during the operations, would need special medical treatment for post-traumatic syndrome disorder (PTSD) (Mainichi Shimbun 2017b). The necessity of special trauma counselling for former Japanese peacekeepers who were sent to UNMISS indicates the untold individual dilemmas of the SDF staff. The true feelings of the Japanese peacekeepers regarding negative aspects in the UNMISS operation were not officially expressed in their daily reports.

Nevertheless, it was disclosed that some daily reports of the Japanese peacekeepers involved in the UNMISS operation described aggravated

situations in South Sudan under the term ‘combat’. The Japanese government, however, explained that it was not ‘combat’ or armed conflict, but ‘shooting cases’ or military clashes. Indeed, some parts of the report were covered in ‘black ink’ in order to conceal specific contents of their experience and activities (Mainichi Shimbun 2017a). Furthermore, a Japanese peacekeeper who was sent to the UNMISS operation committed suicide right after he returned from South Sudan in April 2017 (Shimbun Akahata 2017). The individual-level perspectives offer an insight into the individual dilemmas and mental stress of the Japanese peacekeepers, although they signify at the same time Japan’s proactive contribution to the peacekeeping operations for human security of the people in South Sudan.

### **The implication of Japan’s ‘Proactive Contribution to Peace’ policy**

So far, it has been argued that the United Nations, the Japanese government, and the Japanese peacekeepers were confronted with international, national, and individual dilemmas in the peacekeeping operations in South Sudan. The existence of the dilemmas, however, does not mean that UNMISS, the Japanese government, and the Japanese peacekeepers were not contributive to peacekeeping/nation-building operations in South Sudan. On the contrary, the Japanese peacekeepers in cooperation with the United Nations made a significant contribution to the international peace operations, especially in the field of ‘engineering activities’ in South Sudan. The engineering operations by the Japanese peacekeepers can be assessed in terms of ‘engineering peace’ of South Sudan (Boutellis and Smith 2014).

Some analysts pointed out that Japan’s contribution to peacekeeping operations in Africa, especially South Sudan, could have been motivated by realistic and strategic reasons based on national interests or international prestige (Saraiva 2013; Pajon 2017). Regardless of the realistic motivation or ‘proactive contribution to peace’ ideal, the Japanese peacekeepers were appreciated by an orphanage in Juba and were highly praised by the President of Juba University for contribution to peacebuilding operations and cultural exchange with the local people through the ‘Sports for Peace’

and 'Nebuta Festival' in March 2017 (Secretariat of the International Peace Cooperation Headquarters 2017a). In this context, the Japanese peacekeepers were ordered to withdraw from South Sudan by the end of May 2017 (MOD 2017a). The Japanese peacekeepers completed withdrawal from South Sudan, and safely returned to Aomori Airport on 27 May 2017 (Japan Times 2017a).

Since the *kaketsuke-keigo* mission was added in the end of 2016 and was terminated by the end of May 2017, evidence regarding the implication of the Peace and Security Legislation for Japan's peace operations in South Sudan seems to be as yet unclear, but Prime Minister Abe at least succeeded in implementing the legislation at a policy level to UNPKO though for a short period. In addition, Japan's commitment to UNMISS amounted to more than five years, and the 'engineering activities' in South Sudan (five years and six months) were the longest ever in the history of Japan's peacekeeping cooperation among other engineering missions in Cambodia (about one year), East Timor (about two years and three months), and in Haiti (about three years) (Secretariat of the International Peace Cooperation Headquarters 2017b).

Moreover, Japan's contribution to road repair in South Sudan was two times larger than the road repair in Cambodia, and Japan's contribution to building construction in South Sudan was four times larger than the building construction in Haiti (MOD 2017b:5). In response to Japan's decision to withdraw the SDF from UNMISS, President Kiir expressed his personal gratitude toward Prime Minister Abe and the Japanese government for the contribution to the nation-building in South Sudan through the official development assistance and peacekeeping operations (MOD 2017b:5). Thus, although the Abe government eventually withdrew the SDF from UNMISS, its contribution to the peacekeeping operations for South Sudan under the policy of 'proactive contribution to peace' can be regarded as measurable and meaningful.

Through the analysis of the three-level dilemmas, lessons in the UNMISS operation are summarised as follows. First, it is significant for the United

Nations to strengthen the peacekeeping forces so that there exists ‘peace’ to maintain. Also, it is necessary for the UN peacekeepers to cooperate with the Regional Protection Force in the case of UNMISS. Second, the Japanese government needs to explain the importance of the *kaketsuke-keigo* mission in UNPKO so that the SDF can properly conduct such a mission in future. For this reason, further military training and special trauma counselling for Japanese peacekeepers should be provided by the Ministry of Defence. Japanese peacekeepers might be able to train for the POC mandate with other UN peacekeepers from Asian countries, such as China, South Korea, and India, but the *kaketsuke-keigo* mission shall be limited to a safe place in accordance with the Peace and Security Legislation.

## **Conclusion**

This paper has examined Japan’s commitment to the international peacekeeping operations in UNMISS in terms of the dilemmas of the United Nations, the Japanese government, and the Japanese peacekeepers responding to the changing security situation in South Sudan. Through the analysis of the three-level perspectives, it was confirmed that the United Nations, the Japanese government, and the Japanese peacekeepers were respectively confronted with political and personal dilemmas related to the peacekeeping operations including the POC mandate in UNMISS.

Internationally, it was revealed that peace operations of the United Nations are not necessarily effective in the maintenance of solid ‘ceasefire’. In the case of South Sudan, the fighting parties are not only countries but also different ethnic groups. In this situation, the international community did not recognise the military clashes inside South Sudan as a violation of ceasefire. This is why the UNSC did not withdraw the UN peacekeepers from South Sudan, even after the sporadic but serious military clashes. In this context, the UN peacekeepers failed to protect the local people and humanitarian aid workers in Juba in July 2016. Although the UNSC decided to increase the number of peacekeepers to strengthen UNMISS, the POC mission still remains a difficult and challenging military operation. It became clear that the POC mission authorised with ‘use of force’ is the

international-level dilemma of UNPKO, which is supposed to be conducted under 'ceasefire'.

Domestically, the Abe government added a new mission, '*kaketsuke-keigo*' to the SDF, in spite of the military clashes and the worsening security situation in South Sudan. The new mission used to be suspected as 'unconstitutional' in terms of Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution, but it was legitimised by the enactment of the 2015 Peace and Security Legislation. The Japanese peacekeepers became legally capable of rescuing 'civilians', especially staff of international organisations in the UNMISS operation. Still, the Abe government decided not to conduct the mission to rescue peacekeeping 'soldiers' of other countries in the UNMISS case, although it is legally feasible under the Peace and Security Legislation. Yet, the Abe government ended in withdrawing the SDF from UNMISS earlier, and Defence Minister Inada was forced to resign from the Cabinet due to the issue related to Japan's peace operations in UNMISS. This is the national-level dilemma of the Japanese government which is constrained by Article 9 of the Constitution.

From an individual-level perspective, it was an obvious dilemma for Japanese peacekeepers to conduct the new mission, *kaketsuke-keigo*, in the UNMISS operation. Likewise, personal dilemmas recorded in the on-site reports by the Japanese peacekeepers in South Sudan and reported by Japanese and international newspapers were scrutinised. It turned out that the Japanese peacekeepers who provided official statements did not note that the security situation in South Sudan, especially Juba, was dangerous. Yet, it was revealed that their peacekeeping operations in the country were difficult, stressful, and even traumatic in various ways as shown in the daily reports and newspapers. The new mission could have increased the risk of the Japanese peacekeepers, and might have led to a nightmare scenario where they would need to direct fire against other people or be shot to death. This is the individual-level dilemma in self-defence measures during their peacekeeping operations.

Therefore, it is significant for the United Nations, the Japanese government, and Japanese peacekeepers to overcome the dilemmas related to international peacekeeping operations in future. In particular, it is imperative for the United Nations to strengthen the peacekeeping forces so a 'ceasefire' and 'peace' exist and are to be maintained. The Japanese government needs to explain the necessity of the *kaketsuke-keigo* mission in relation to the POC mandate in UNPKO. In addition, proper military training and special trauma counselling for Japanese peacekeepers should be provided. Despite the dilemmas and difficulties at the three levels, the Japanese peacekeepers contributed to 'human security' and 'engineering peace' in South Sudan, and the Japanese government will need to continue further commitment for the nation-building of South Sudan under the policy of 'human security' and 'proactive contribution to peace'.

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