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Spoilers and Peace Agreements: The South Sudan Conflict (2013-2019)

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Abstract:

Negotiated settlements are fragile and require diligence in ensuring that peace holds after a period of conflict. Most peace agreements are vulnerable to spoiler activity either at the negotiation or implementation stages. Spoilers are either internal or external parties to a peace agreement. Their involvement and interest in the conflict could be direct or indirect by way of proxy. The South Sudan conflict has seen various peace agreements signed from 2014- 2018 with varied success. Numerous violations of the agreements have been occasioned by spoilers both internal and external. This research outlines the various roles spoilers have played in derailing the South Sudan peace project. It outlines the impact internal and external spoilers have had on the peace process. It concludes and recommends that regional and international partners to the peace process in South Sudan need to double their efforts in offering guarantees that will see the newly found peace hold.

Keywords: Conflict, Peace Agreements, Spoilers, Guarantees to peace.

1.   Introduction

Negotiated settlements have been increasingly accepted as the preferred way of ending a civil war (Bekoe, 2005). Since the end of the Cold War, United Nations (UN) missions across the globe have more than doubled in an effort to stop hostilities. Negotiated settlements, however, have a poor record of success (Bekoe, 2005). Agreements in essence indicate that various parties have agreed to mutually and formally accept a particular course of action. They emerge out of direct or indirect negotiations among the parties, and are characterized by the fact that each party makes some formal concession to the other (Zeev, 1984).

Despite the concessions, peace agreements are vulnerable to spoiler activities, with some being more prone to this vice than others (Caspersen, 2017). They at times face major challenges from detractors who attempt to undermine their successful implementation (Stedman, 2000). These spoilers comprise leaders and parties who view the emerging peace as a major threat to their

interests and power. They willingly risk using violence to derail the peace agreement either due to a feeling of exclusion or betrayal (Stedman, 2000).

Spoilers can destroy agreements. In 1992, for instance, Jonas Savimbi plunged Angola back into civil war by disputing the United Nations monitored elections and thereby led to 300,000 civilian deaths. Hutu extremists orchestrated genocide in Rwanda in 1994 while rejecting the Arusha Peace accords. This led to 800,000 deaths in a span of three months (Stedman, 2000). The 2013 civil conflict and the subsequent failed peace agreements in South Sudan have pointed to salient questions that need to be answered. Among them is whether there were spoilers in the peace process that hampered the quest for peace.

This study examines the impact that spoilers had on peace agreements between 2014 and 2018 in the South Sudan conflict.

Spoilers in Peace Processes and Agreements

There are two main types of spoilers; insiders and outsiders (Mutwol, 2009). Insider spoilers participate in the peace process, sign the peace agreement and even signal support for the implementation but fail to follow through. In doing that, their motive includes the need to achieve their goals albeit through maintaining the guise of supporting the peace process. They are especially sensitive to decisions that would weaken them militarily (Mutwol, 2009). Outside spoilers exclude themselves from the peace process because they feel their demands would not be catered for and openly declare their hostility to the process. They eventually use any means, including open violence, to disrupt and upset the process (Mutwol, 2009).

Certain aspects of the peace process could actually attract some opposition. (Caspersen, 2017). For some spoilers, opposition to the agreement connotes some discomfort to certain sections of the agreement. Some of the reasons that could lead to opposition of peace agreements include unjustness of certain aspects of, or obvious flaws in, the agreement.

Violence that occurs while a peace process is going on however may not necessarily be attributed to spoilers (Ginty, 2006). Peace settlements do not offer strong guarantees that violence can be controlled or terminated. There are complexities that are intertwined with especially, ethnonational conflict that are deep seated and resist quick fixes (Ginty, 2006). Parties especially embroiled in such conflict are oblivious to the efforts being made at realizing peace.

International actors go a long way in ensuring the success or failure of peace agreements that are plagued by spoilers (Stedman, 2001). They can create and implement effective strategies to manage the effect of spoilers (Stedman, 2001). Where this was done, like the example of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement signed in August 2000 ending the Burundian Civil

war, peace triumphed and peace agreements lasted. Where international actors failed to contain spoilers, peace agreements collapsed, with catastrophic results to lives. A good example is Jonas Savimbi who disputed elections and plunged Angola back into civil war.

Contrastingly, international actors appear as parties to the spoiler concept and seem to oppose peace agreements (Stedman, 2001). Peace agreements that are enacted in regions plagued with conflict fall victim to interstate competition. The attitudes and interests of surrounding states affect the success or failure of the peace agreement (Stedman, 2001). A peace process is likely to be successful if it receives the support of neighbouring states that have been supporting the rebels or insurgents in a particular conflict (Mutwol, 2009). A good example is the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) signed in 2018, where Sudan and Uganda took leading roles in bringing the agreement to fruition. These countries supported different factions involved in the conflict. Spoilers, especially in intrastate conflict, are mostly strong and adamant if they believe they have the support of a neighbouring state, as opposed to when they do not have it (Stedman, 2001).

The South Sudan Conflict

Due to a protracted political power struggle between President Salva Kiir and Riek Machar, civil war broke out in South Sudan after fighting ensued between military forces loyal to the two principals (Case, 2016). It started in Juba on 15 December 2013, in military barracks south of the city before spreading to the military headquarters of Bilpam, located north of Juba (Rolandsen, 2015). Government forces singled out and rounded up opposition leaders within the SPLM and detained them. Riek Machar ran away and re-appeared leading a splinter faction of the SPLM which renamed itself as the Sudan's People Liberation Movement –In Opposition (SPLM-IO. The conflict took largely ethnic dimensions pitting the Nuer and the Dinka, South Sudan's two largest ethnic groups, with systematic targeting and killings resulting in the displacement, and deaths, of thousands of civilians (Case, 2016).

From 2005, political competition between Salva Kiir and Riek Machar continued to persist, way into the six years during the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (Ylönen, 2014). In April 2013, President Kiir demoted Vice President Machar within the party and eventually dismissed him from the government. He also dismissed the entire cabinet in July 2013, leading to heightened tension (Mamdani, 2016). There were accusations and counter accusations as to who had failed in the SPLM party. The former Secretary General of the SPLM, Pagan Amum, traded accusations with the Vice President James Wanni Igga on who had failed in the leadership of the country (James Wani Igga, 2014).

Machar called for a National Liberation Council (NLC) meeting slated for December 14, 2013 and declared his intention to run for the Presidency. Three other senior members of the (NLC) also declared their intention to run for the leadership of the SPLM. This effectively challenged Kiir's position as the Presidential candidate in the 2015 elections (James Wani Igga, 2014). Given the heightened political tension in South-Sudan, attempts by various influential parties including top military, intelligence, and religious leaders to postpone the NLC meeting failed. The meeting was held triggering immediate violence (Mamdani, 2016).

Following the fighting that begun after a tense meeting of the SPLM leadership, Kiir publicly accused Machar of having attempted a coup and armed youth in Juba (Human Rights Watch, 2014). He then detained thirteen political figures on suspicion of having conspired with Machar to overthrow his government (Pinaud, 2014). Machar in turn claimed that the President had armed a youth militia to instigate chaos and get rid of his political opponents (Rolandsen, 2015). Specially formed Dinka and Nuer militias carried out killings along ethnic lines as Machar called on the military to overthrow Kiir as conflict intensified in other states in the country (Johnson, 2014).

The government initially received military backing to fight Machar's forces from neighboring Uganda (Johnson, 2014). The Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF) troops were stationed in South Sudan as part of a force that was fighting against the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). Other forces that rallied to Kiir's assistance included the SPLA- North, a force that still fought Khartoum for the liberation of the Blue Nile state, and the Darfur Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) from South Kordofan (Johnson, 2014).

Intense diplomatic pressure, particularly from the African Union and IGAD led to the signing of two cessation-of-hostilities agreements in Addis Ababa. These agreements were, however, violated and the fighting stopped only on the onset of the rainy season in the month of May 2014 (Johnson, 2014). This started a series of lengthy negotiations that culminated into a number of peace agreements being signed albeit with varying degrees of challenges over a period of five years.

The peace process led to the signing of several peace agreements. From 2013 to 2018 a total of six main agreements and five addendums were signed in a bid to resolve the South Sudan conflict. The main agreements were the Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities between the Government of South Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement in Opposition, the Agreement on the Status of Detainees between the Government of South Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement in Opposition, the Agreement to Resolve the Crisis in South Sudan, the
Agreement on the Reunification of the Sudan's Peoples Liberation Movement, the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, and the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS).

Spoilers and Their Impact on the South Sudan Peace Process

1. International and Regional Spoilers of the Peace Process.

International actors become spoilers when they oppose or seem to oppose peace agreements (Stedman, 2001). Peace agreements that are enacted in regions plagued with conflict fall victim to interstate competition. The attitudes and interests of surrounding states affect the success or failure of the peace agreement (Stedman, 2001). A peace process is likely to be successful if it receives the support of neighbouring states that have been supporting the rebels or insurgents in a particular conflict (Mutwol, 2009). The South Sudan peace process and resultant agreements faced challenges from regional and extra-continental forces.

a) Uganda

Uganda intervened in the Southern Sudan civil in 2013 due to several factors (International Crisis Group, 2016). First, it intervened to prevent Juba from falling to Machar's forces, acting as a proxy for Khartoum which is Kampala's rival (International Crisis Group, 2016). Ugandan forces, combined with government troops, pushed the rebel attack from the city of Bor to the north (International Crisis Group, 2016). Second, Uganda also worried about the stability of its northern neighbor given the deepening political crisis within the SPLM leadership in 2013 (Ylönen, 2014). Third, the UPDF served the purpose of preserving the Kiir regime, as well as protecting and rescuing Ugandan nationals in Juba (Ylönen, 2014).

The Cessation of Hostilities (COH) agreement signed on 23rd January 2014 stipulated that it would come into force after twenty-four hours on signing (IGAD, 2014). A key condition stipulated that all foreign forces would withdraw from the theatre of conflict. Uganda did not withdraw its troops as stipulated, directly breaching the CoH agreement (Kasaija, 2014). It further defied calls from the United States, Ethiopia and Norway to withdraw its troops from South Sudan. Uganda stated that it intended to only withdraw when an IGAD Protection and Deterrence Force (PDF) deployed in the country to protect key government installations (Kasaija, 2014). Positions within the SPLM/A –IO hardened when Government allied foreign forces comprised of Ugandan and Darfur rebel forces stayed on and continued to fight (Changkuoth, 2014).

Uganda was also critiqued for the role it played in changing the Protocol on Agreed Principles on Transitional Arrangements towards Resolution of the Crisis in South Sudan which was signed in June 2014 under the auspices of IGAD (Tiitmamer & Awolich., 2014). The initial protocol had advocated for the establishment of a Transitional Government of National Unity (TGONU) headed by the incumbent President and deputized by a Vice President. The office of Prime Minister was to be established with SPLM/A-IO nominating the holder of the office, a person who was to be acceptable to the President (Tiitmamer & Awolich., 2014). The Sudan People's Liberation Movement/ Army in Opposition (SPLM/A-IO) refused to sign because it felt that regional IGAD

interference had altered the proposed protocol in favor of the incumbent South Sudanese government (Dersso & Louw-Vaudran, 2014). Kenya and Uganda had initiated changes to the original proposal which had separated the Head of State and the Head of Government, with the proposal that the SPLM/A-IO could nominate the Prime Minister heading the government (Dersso & Louw-Vaudran, 2014). Uganda's President, Yoweri Museveni argued against separating the roles of Head of State and Head of Government as suggested in the proposed protocol stating that a sitting regional Head of State could not be stripped of his authority as Head of Government (Astill-Brown, 2014). This resulted in the widening of the rift between the South Sudan government and the SPLM/A-IO.

b) Sudan

Sudan's involvement in its neighbor's civil war was prompted by the need to deal with the ensuing developing economic challenge it faced and the opportunity to assert its agenda over a weakened neighbor (International Crisis Group, 2016). President Bashir of Sudan engaged with Kiir but continued to support Machar's SPLM/A-IO, in a bid to maintain some form of leverage (International Crisis Group, 2016). Khartoum also acquired a pivotal role while serving as one of the three initial IGAD appointed mediators alongside Kenya and Ethiopia (International Crisis Group, 2016).

Sudan, however, came under intense criticism for supporting and arming Machar's faction (Oluoch, 2016). A report by the London based research firm Conflict Armament Research stated that Sudan had on numerous occasions between September and October 2014, dropped weapons and ammunition in territory controlled by Machar's forces (Oluoch, 2016). Weaponry captured by the South Sudan government forces in these regions showed that over seventy percent of the ammunition was of Sudanese origin. Khartoum however denied these allegations, terming the conflict in South Sudan as a purely internal ethnic affair (Oluoch, 2016).

c) Ethiopia

Ethiopia's involvement in South Sudan's civil war was motivated by three issues (Verjee, 2017). First it was concerned that the conflict would destabilize its border areas. It was also concerned that the South Sudan conflict could potentially develop into a protracted regional conflict with neighboring states drawn in. Lastly it was concerned that the South Sudanese refugees pouring into the historically volatile Gambella region in western Ethiopia, would lead to its destabilization (Verjee, 2017).

Ethiopia was instrumental in putting pressure on President Kiir and Riek Machar to sign the Agreement to Resolve the Crisis in South Sudan, which collapsed later, with both leaders complaining of having signed the agreement under duress (Rolandsen & Manoeli, 2014). This

action spoiled the process in that it denied the parties an opportunity to discuss and reach an agreement without any undue external influence. Ethiopia was also accused of having rushed into the mediation process in total disregard of the experience of the mediation team, thus leading to collapse of the agreements.

d) Kenya

Kenya's interest and involvement in the South Sudan conflict was grounded on a number of issues. It was particularly worried about the increased insecurity along its border with South Sudan. (Mesfin, 2015). It was concerned about its neutrality in the conflict, if it were prolonged indefinitely, given that it had close ties with the two warring parties (Mesfin, 2015). To date the extent of the African refugee crisis had remained a major challenge (Veney, 2007). The possible high influx of refugees from South Sudan was therefore a major issue. Kenya also had vast economic interests with the Kenya Commercial Bank and Equity Bank dominating South Sudan's financial services (Mesfin, 2015). Kenya's role as a spoiler was its interference coupled with Uganda on the changing of the Protocol on Agreed Principles on Transitional Arrangements towards Resolution of the Crisis in South Sudan (Tiitmamer & Awolich., 2014). This interference led to the SPLM-IO refusing to sign the agreement thus stalling the peace process.

e) The United Nations

The United Nations (UN) already had a presence in South Sudan when the civil war broke out in 2013 under the aegis of the United Nations Mission in South United Sudan (UNMISS) (Rolandsen,2015). UNMISS was mandated to assist South Sudan in its first few years of independence, as a peace time operation. This mandate was, however, changed three times by the UN Security Council when full scale civil war broke out in 2013, resulting in a surge of personnel from 7000 to 12,500 (Rolandsen,2015). This was after an assessment by the UN showed that there were clear political and military factors that could lead to genocide in the civil war (Knopf, 2016).

The United Nations mandated UNIMISS to assist in the implementation of the 23rd January 2014 Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities between the Government of South Sudan (GOSS) and Sudan's Peoples Liberation Movement- In Opposition (SPLM-IO) (Rolandsen,2015). This was not possible as the parties continued to violate repeated agreements that were signed. Continued and intense fighting in August 2016 in Juba, prompted the UN Security Council to authorize the deployment within UNMISS of a 4,000 strong Regional Protection Force (RPF) (Human Rights Watch, 2017). This force was mandated to protect civilians and key infrastructure in the capital.

The South Sudan government was not comfortable with this arrangement and resorted to restricting the movement of UN peace keepers in the country and frustrated the deployment of the RPF (Human Rights Watch, 2017). This turn of events prompted the UN Security Council to threaten to impose an arms embargo on South- Sudan (Human Rights Watch, 2017).

UN Peace keepers were unable to stop clashes that erupted in July 2016 and respond to a crisis that led to the assault of foreign aid workers (Grant,2016). The UN Secretary-General sacked the Kenyan force commander in charge of UNMISS, and Kenya retaliated by withdrawing its entire force from the mission (Human Rights Watch, 2017). With the perceived failure of UNMISS, in stopping the Juba clashes in July 2016, the peace treaty between the SPLA/M and SPLA-IO collapsed leading to renewed clashes (Nicogossian & Gonzalez, 2017). The United Nations presence and involvement in the peace process appeared to aggravate the positions of the protagonists thus complicating the peace process.

f) Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)

Since the advent of the 2013 civil war in South Sudan, IGAD met at the summit level three times to find a solution to the conflict (Kasaija, 2015). In the same month that conflict broke out, IGAD appointed three special envoys from Kenya, Sudan and Ethiopia to mediate between the warring parties (Motsamai, 2017).

The IGAD-led mediation process brought a number of multilateral efforts together and persuaded the South Sudanese stakeholders to sign the August 2015 Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (ARCSS) (Motsamai, 2017). A key structure established in this agreement was the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JMEC) to monitor the implementation of the peace agreement (Motsamai, 2017).

IGAD faced numerous challenges and criticisms on how it handled the Crisis in South Sudan. One criticism dealt with the perception of its bias in favor of the Kiir government (Changkuoth, 2014). The non-withdrawal of the Ugandan forces from South Sudan after the signing of the Cessation of Hostilities agreement on 23rd January 2014, led to accusations that IGAD, was not committed to an impartial peace process (Changkuoth, 2014). A re-dedication agreement was signed on 9th May 2014 to reiterate the issues raised in the first agreement with Ugandan forces still stationed in Juba, further raising questions on IGADs impartiality.

IGAD also had to contend with stakeholder's demands on which parties were to be allowed into the peace talks (Mabor, 2014). The general argument from the warring parties was that the selection

of the stakeholders was not consultative and broad based. The SPLMA-IO claimed that the stakeholders chosen for the peace talks were biased and pro-government. The ensuing standoff and disagreement led to a deadlock (Mabor, 2014). The IGAD peace process mainly focused on President Kiir and Riek Machar, excluding other key stakeholders (Gebrekidan,2015). IGAD failed to provide for active participation of other key stakeholders in South Sudan like religious leaders, women, youth, civil society, other political parties and other semi-autonomous armed groups (Gebrekidan,2015).

IGAD also faced criticism for not condemning atrocities allegedly committed by allies of the Juba regime (Changkuoth, 2014). These included cluster bombing of Nuers in Jonglei state by the Ugandan air force and attacks and killings in various IDP camps stationed near UNIMISS camps in Bor and Malakal.

Uganda and Sudan further hindered IGAD's effectiveness in mediating in the South Sudan conflict (Mesfin, 2015). These two states had vested interests in the conflict, secretly supported their proxies, and contributed to political and military stalemate in the South Sudan peace talks (Mesfin, 2015). Eight Head of State summit meetings supported the mediation efforts but regional rivalries rendered IGAD incapable of presenting a unified front and pressure on the South Sudan warring parties (ICG, 2015).

g) IGAD Plus
The IGAD-PLUS was formed in March 2015 after months of unfruitful mediation (ICG, 2015). An expanded body that included all parties involved in the South Sudan crisis, it comprised the AU, EU, UN, the Troika, China and the IGAD Partners Forum (ICG, 2015). The IGAD Partners Forum comprised IGAD's donor partners.

IGAD-PLUS was instrumental in exerting pressure on the warring parties to come to an agreement (ICG, 2015). It provided the parties with a draft of proposals for the ARCSS agreement and eventually followed through in the witnessing of the same when it was signed in August 2015 (ICG, 2015). However, the pressure that IGAD-PLUS exerted on the peace process, was negatively construed by the Kiir regime which interpreted it as a ploy to impose a regime that would allow the international community access the country's mineral wealth (Muortat, 2015).

h) The African Union (AU)
The African Union intervention in the South Sudan conflict was predicated on its Constitutive Act on the issue of intervention in intrastate conflicts where it was mandated to intervene in a member

state if it suspected that there were grave circumstances, namely war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity being committed in that state. In the South Sudan issue, this objective was achieved by the AU holding numerous meetings and issuing a number of communiques that sought to address the conflict. It intervened through its Peace and Security Council (PSC) and through the establishment of the AU Commission of Inquiry on South Sudan (AUCISS) (AU, 2013).

The AUCISS was established to look at the killings and violations committed against human rights from the advent of the conflict in December 2013 (Gebrekidan,2015). It was chaired by former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo. It was also mandated to look at ways of fostering accountability, healing and reconciliation. Its formation was welcomed by IGAD but its report and findings were withheld for fear that they would jeopardize the on-going peace process (Gebrekidan,2015).

This decision made the AU face a dual challenge from within its members and external partners. The AU was open to imposing sanctions on South Sudan leaders who repeatedly violated the ceasefires (Wroughton, 2018). However, Ethiopia influenced the AU in its capacity as IGAD chair and opposed any sanctions on the South Sudanese elite citing the negative impact the release of the AUCISS report would have on the peace process (Gebrekidan,2015). This contrasted with the International Community led by the UN Security Council, the US, Britain, Norway, and International NGOs who wanted the report released. The report was finally released on the 27th October 2015 (AU, 2015).

Another key challenge that the African Union faced in its pursuit of resolving the South Sudanese crisis was its lack of leverage over the warring parties (Adeba & Prendergast, 2018). The AU had been unable to take action against the warring parties for violations of the peace agreements (Adeba & Prendergast, 2018). This inaction emboldened the warring parties repeatedly to violate the peace agreements, thus undermining the IGAD peace process.

i) The United States, Norway and United Kingdom (Troika)
The Troika group consisting of the US, Norway and UK complemented the UN efforts in bringing peace to South Sudan right from 2013 (Asige,2017). They were instrumental in peacekeeping and peace building initiatives. They actively, together with the EU and China, sent delegates to the peace processes and funded the various peace initiatives (Asige,2017).

The Troika also faced the challenge experienced by other International actors including IGAD, the AU, the EU, and UN in not exerting leverage on the conflicting parties for their violation of the peace agreements (Gebrekidan,2015). Its impartiality was particularly called into question when it remained silent after acts of atrocities were allegedly committed against the Nuer community by the South Sudan government (Changkuoth, 2014).

The US in particular, in conjunction with the UN, attempted to employ hard power while dealing with the belligerents who violated various peace agreements (Asige,2017). It proposed targeted sanctions against South Sudan and the perpetrators but encountered opposition from China and Russia in the UN Security Council when they vetoed attempts to impose an arms embargo on South Sudan when conflict broke out in 2013 (Nichols, 2014).

j) China

China's involvement in the South Sudan conflict hinged on three factors. The first was to protect its massive economic investments in the Oil sector which begun in the 1990's and expanded after the 2011 referendum that established the independent South Sudan state (Large, 2016). The second was to support an end to the war, and third to serve humanitarian objectives (ICG, 2017). China however played spoiler in the South Sudan process by vetoing suggestions on proposed sanctions by the UN Security Council against key perpetrators of the prolonged conflict in South Sudan (Nichols, 2014).

China had established itself as one of the main suppliers of weapons to President Kiir through Mombasa (Oluoch, 2016). A UN panel of expert's report in August 2015 showed that China North Industries Corporation, a defense contractor, had earlier sold $20 million worth of "arms, ammunition, and related materiel" to the government's armed forces. However, after the start of the conflict, the Chinese government canceled another $38 million order for weapons in October 2014 (Oluoch, 2016).

2.   Internal Spoilers of the Peace Process
a)   Sudan's Peoples Liberation Movement –In Government (SPLM-IG)

Power dynamics played a critical role in the way negotiations were carried out in the South Sudan peace process. Throughout the negotiation process, President Salva Kiir and his SPLM-IG faction continued to wield a lot of political power as enshrined in the Transitional Constitution of South Sudan (Thiong, 2018). This continued to give him an upper hand over his rivals generating a clear lack of political goodwill to implement the agreements thus eroding the peace process (Gebrekidan, 2015).

One of the key supporters of the SPLM-IG faction during the conflict was Uganda. Uganda's continued presence in Juba at the behest of the Kiir regime became a sticking point in the peace process. Salva Kiir and Uganda took advantage of an ambiguity on the withdrawal of foreign troops from the theatre of conflict as indicated in the COH agreement. In this agreement, IGAD never

clarified details on the withdrawal of Ugandan forces or those of other foreign forces fighting in Juba (ICG, 2015). The COH agreement stipulated that it would come into force after twentyfour hours on signing but Uganda did not withdraw (IGAD, 2014).

b)   Sudan's Peoples Liberation Movement- In Opposition (SPLM-IO)

The SPLM-IO became a spoiler in the peace process on several occasions in its quest to achieving certain demands it had. With reference to power sharing, the collapse of the IGAD led peace process on March 6, 2015, was largely attributed to the SPLM-IO demand for an agreement that elevated Machar to the position of first Vice President in an interim government, whereas the SPLM-IG countered that he was to remain equal in power and stature to the incumbent Vice President James Wani Igga (Gebrekidan, 2015).

Another instance revolved around military power sharing whereby in the peace negotiations of March 2015 a dispute arose when the SPLM-IG demanded that former soldiers who had defected to the SPLM-IO lay down their arms and became reintegrated into a unified army (Gebrekidan, 2015). Machar opposed this insisting on keeping his forces intact, during the envisioned two-anda-half-year transitional period (Gebrekidan, 2015).

c)   General Thomas Cirrilo Swaka

A key opponent of the revitalized peace process in South Sudan is Lt General Thomas Cirillo Swaka, who defected from the SPLA on March 2017, and formed a new group called the National Salvation Front (NAS). (Radio Tamazuj, 2017). He was a former Deputy Chief of Staff in charge of logistics who left and begun a new wave of campaigns against the government with his militia. He repeatedly called for new leadership in South Sudan devoid of Riek Machar and Kiir whom he accused of polarizing the country due to their inability to solve the national crisis that resulted from the 2013 conflict (Radio Tamazuj, 2017).

In an appeal to the UN security Council, General Cirrilo stated that President Kiir regime was incapable of instituting meaningful change in the country after failing to implement the 2015 Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (ARCSS) agreement (Radio Tamazuj, 2017). He appealed to the UN Security Council to empower the United Nations Mission South Sudan (UNMISS) to be able to protect civilians and enforce the deployment of the Regional Protection Force (RPF) (Radio Tamazuj, 2017).

In renewed talks and negotiations to revitalize the peace process in South Sudan, General Swaka and his group participated in the talks for the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) but failed to sign it (Oluoch, 2019). His

contention was that the agreement did not capture the root causes of the conflict in South Sudan but became an instrument to reward the political elite in South Sudan with positions of power (Oluoch, 2019).

Cirrillo's discontent and opposition to the revitalized agreement led to renewed fighting between his forces and the governments' in February 2019 in the Yei river state (H.E. Amb Lt. Gen Augostino, 2019). This prompted the IGAD council of ministers to reach out to him through the IGAD Special Envoy for South Sudan, Ambassador Dr. Ismail Wais. General Cirrillo however remained adamant that the agreement did not represent the collective will and aspirations of the South Sudan populace and as such he was not bound by the Permanent Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements stipulated in the (R-ARCSS) (H.E. Amb Lt. Gen Augostino, 2019). He has remained a potential spoiler, insisting that the R-ARCSS agreement be renegotiated with his input, a prospect that IGAD has not been keen to entertain (Malak, 2019).

d) General Paul Malong Awan

General Paul Malong Awan is the former Chief of Defence forces for the SPLA who was relieved of command by President Salva Kiir in May 2017. He formed his opposition group the South Sudan United Front and declared war against the government led by President Salva Kiir (Malak, 2019). General Malong was accused by the UN of having overseen the commission of gross violations against the 2014-2015 peace agreements in his capacity as the Chief of Staff of the SPLA during his tenure. (UN, 2018).

General Malong and his party are not signatories to the new R-ARCSS agreement which he opposes (Mayik, 2019). He has repeatedly mobilized his militia to fight against government forces and stands accused of using child soldiers in his militia. (Mayik, 2019). He has been identified as a major threat to the peace and stability of the newly formed Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity. (Malak, 2019). This has led to repeated efforts by IGAD and the government to reach out to him which appear to have borne fruit through a newly signed declaration to stop hostilities which was signed and was to come into effect on the 15th January 2020 (Malak, 2020).

Conclusion

The South Sudan peace process faced intricate challenges from within and without. Internally, intense competition for power between the SPLM-IG and SPLM –IO led to repeated violations of the various peace agreements that they signed between 2014-2015. SPLM-IG violated the agreements because it perceived that it had an upper hand due to military strength. The SPLM-IO violated the agreements or refused to sign whenever it felt that its demands were not being met.

Other emerging internal spoilers have been former influential and powerful military figures who fell out with the government. These are General Paul Malong, and General Thomas Cirillo Swaka. These two Generals who now lead separate opposition outfits, military, and political groups have been identified as potential spoilers to the quest for peace in South Sudan. They have continually placed new demands on the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity, precariously complicating the peace architecture of the nation.

Externally, two forces indirectly acted in concert to impede the peace process in South Sudan. Regionally, complex geo-political interests spun a web that trapped this peace process in a never ending cycle of perceived failure. Neighboring countries repeatedly pulled in different directions in a bid to acquire influence in the Juba regime. These interests indirectly led to complacency in monitoring and enforcing the peace agreements, and in holding to account the violators of the agreements, thus spoiling the peace process. Internationally, extra-continental interests in the process also played a role in spoiling the peace process in South Sudan. The 2015 ARCSS agreement was not well implemented largely due to key failure by the international community in funding, and enforcing the implementation of the peace agreement. New concerted efforts delivered the Revitalized ARCSS in 2018 but it remains to be seen whether this new peace will hold. IGAD and the international community should learn from past challenges and make a concerted effort to faithfully offer guarantees to the peace process by playing their oversight roles in guiding the process. Efforts at reaching out to potential spoilers should be encouraged in an attempt at creating an inclusive process that will give South Sudan a chance to experience lasting peace.

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