
UNMISS Short Mission Brief

I. Activity Summary: UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)

Overview

The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) deployed on South Sudan's independence in July 2011. The United Nations Security Council first mandated UNMISS as a complex multi-dimensional mission tasked to support establishment of the new South Sudanese state, and help it solidify the foundations for sustainable peace. But the mission soon ran aground. Following serious violations of the Status of Forces agreement, a political crisis brewed which returned South Sudan to civil war, with the government as belligerents. While UNMISS failed to foresee this crisis, it took unprecedented action by opening its bases to civilians fleeing imminent threats of physical violence. Thus, UNMISS sailed into uncharted legal and operational waters for United Nations peacekeeping. It became a mission focused on protecting civilians in an environment where it could not rely on the consent of a host government, while finding itself peripheral to peace negotiations.

As of June 2015, the mission comprised 12,523 uniformed personnel, 796 international civilian personnel, 1,204 local civilian staff, and 409 United Nations Volunteers.^[i] Top troop contributing countries include India (2267), Nepal (1576), Rwanda (1841), and Ethiopia (1265), as well as Kenya (735) and Mongolia (862).^[ii] Between July 2011 and June 2015, 35 UNMISS personnel have been killed, including military, police, and civilians.^[iii] Both government forces and armed factions have directly attacked UNMISS personnel, and they have also killed UN troops in crossfire.

Background

Following more than two decades of civil war, the Government of the Sudan and Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) signed the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement. This paved the way for an interim period, referendum and independence for South Sudan on July 9, 2011. By then, the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) had been present for six years throughout southern Sudan and in the "three areas", covering the contested Abyei Area and the northern Sudanese states of South Kordofan and Blue Nile. In early July 2011, the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) had also deployed to oversee a ceasefire in the Abyei Area, while UNMIS rapidly drew down on expiration of its mandate. Meanwhile, the border region between Sudan and South Sudan remained tense. Inter-communal conflict and raiding continued to motivate violent confrontations, and increased militarization of armed groups from the war, which threatened civilians and overall security.

The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) deployed in UNMIS' place in South Sudan. On the one hand, UNMISS had a robust multi-dimensional mandate under Chapter VII of United Nations Charter, covering statebuilding, reconciliation and protection of civilians. On the other hand, it remained restricted to the South Sudanese side of the North-South border, reliant on UNISFA to manage border security issues, and with limited capacity to fully dispense its mandate.

In December 2013, civil war broke out as a consequence of a political dispute within the ruling SPLM, which triggered disintegration of the army into factions, largely aligned around the rivalry between President Salva

Kiir and his former deputy, Riek Machar. Kiir, who is from the Dinka ethnic group, and Machar, from the Nuer people, were on different sides of a major split within the SPLM/A in the early 1990s.^[vi] Throughout the next decade, Kiir, Machar and their commanders drew on ethnic loyalties in the SPLM/A to mobilize support, dividing the rebel army along political and ethnic lines, with all factions inflicting violence against civilians. Memories of this violence contributed to the rapid polarization of groups loyal to Kiir and Machar when conflict reignited in 2013.

The December 2013 crisis followed a year of escalating political tension. This came to a head on December 14, 2013 at a meeting of the long-postponed SPLM National Liberation Council when Kiir's critics within the party had planned to confront him with a series of reforms that would have challenged his leadership. Machar did not attend the following session on December 15. That evening, a misunderstanding among soldiers in the SPLA Tiger Division (the elite Presidential Guard) over access to and storage of weapons triggered a violent confrontation at SPLA headquarters in Juba, which quickly escalated beyond the barracks into street warfare across the capital. While proof of the exact trigger(s) is hazy, violence quickly spread. Kiir announced an alleged coup attempt by Machar, who in turn accused the president of an attempt to kill him and his supporters. Kiir and Machar's supporters split into separate armed factions. Violence soon spread beyond Juba to Jonglei, Upper Nile, and Unity states.^[vii] Since then, the violence has assumed a dynamic of its own, independent from clearly-defined command and control characteristics of conventional bilateral warfare. Armed groups – including factions of the army, opposition militias, ad hoc mobilization of armed youths (in configurations such as the White Army), and community protection groups – have targeted civilians along ethnic lines, attacked peacekeepers and humanitarian workers, perpetrated rape and sexual violence, destroyed property and looted villages, and recruited children into their ranks, among other serious crimes.^[viii] While estimates are inaccurate due to access issues, some assert (as of October 2015) that 1.6 million people were displaced inside South Sudan, and more than 620,000 were refugees in neighbouring countries. Death toll estimates vary and difficult to verify.^[ix]

Mandate

The UN Security Council established UNMISS through resolution 1996 in July 2011, invoking Chapter VII of the UN Charter. The Government of Sudan, suspicious of a UN bias towards the SPLM, demanded that UNMIS end operations in the north. Meanwhile, the newly-independent Government of the Republic of South Sudan (GRSS) agreed that troops remain in the south and transition into UNMISS, despite earlier SPLM frustrations with the UN.^[x] The UNMISS mandate reflected the international community's position that GRSS was primarily responsible as a sovereign state for ensuring security, protecting civilians, and conducting other statebuilding activities. Therefore, the original UNMISS mandate made clear the UN's role in supporting and assisting the government.^[xi]

The mission's focus on state and institution building diverged from the former UNMIS mandate. The UN Security Council established UNMIS to monitor and promote implementation of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement and undertake specific tasks to ensure the achievement of the peace agreement's core provisions, including the referendum on self-determination in January 2011. By contrast, UNMISS was more expansive. It aimed to support the newly established government in accomplishing large goals in the areas of development, security, institution building, and rule of law. At the outset, the UN and GRSS had a more amicable relationship than the UN had enjoyed with the Government of Sudan during the UNMIS era. This shaped expectations that UNMISS could achieve a more ambitious and multidimensional mandate.

The mission was authorized to use "all necessary means" to implement the protection of civilians (PoC) provisions of its mandate. Initially, the mandate specified a force contingent of 7,000 troops and 900 civilian police. The UN and troop contributors envisioned that UNMISS would support the government in protecting civilians, but fill the gaps through "proactive deployment and patrols" when the government failed.^[xii] The original PoC strategy included five main priority areas, including: "incidents in the border areas affecting civilians; rebel militia activities; inter-communal violence; threats to civilians during security operations...and the activities of LRA."^[xiii] The strategy also adopted a three-tiered approach based on: (1) Protection through

[the] political process; (2) Providing protection from physical violence; and (3) Establishing a protective environment.^[xii] The PoC strategy's wording reflected the UN's sensitivity to South Sudan's demand that it provide security against external threats, while also enshrining a responsibility to protect civilians under threat from any quarters, including (implicitly) from the government itself.

As outlined below, UNMISS faced significant challenges to its mandate from the very beginning. These challenges included the December 2011-January 2012 Jonglei crisis, and violations of the Status of Forces Agreement, eventually pushing UNMISS to prioritize logistical activities over the political portions of its mandate. When the December 2013 crisis erupted, the UN Security Council moved quickly, to pass resolution 2132 within days. This pared down the UNMISS mandate, jettisoning statebuilding activities and prioritizing protection of civilians. In the deteriorating security context, it was clear that a mandate to foster institution building and contribute to economic development was unviable.^[xiii] The new mandate also increased the mission's troop level to 12,500 military personnel, and a police component of up to 1,323 in Formed Police Units. The civilian police were deployed in order to "maintain the civilian nature" of conflict-affected areas, especially where civilians sought protection on UN bases.^[xiv] Police enhanced civilian security by confiscating weapons and conducting patrols within the sites, while UN military forces protected the perimeter and surrounding areas.

In March 2014, the UN Secretary General's Report to the Security Council on South Sudan advocated for retooling UNMISS to focus on five areas: "protecting civilians under imminent threat of violence," "contributing to the creation of security conditions conducive for the delivery of humanitarian assistance," "increasing human rights monitoring and reporting," "fostering inter-communal and national dialogue," and "supporting the IGAD monitoring mechanism and political dialogue" associated with the negotiation process.^[xv] The Security Council heeded these recommendations and passed resolution 2155 in May 2014. This constituted one of the UN Security Council's strongest articulations of protection of civilians provisions in any peacekeeping mandate.^[xvi] It also represented an instance of the UN Security Council realizing the limits of peacekeeping and scaling back operations to focus on immediate risks to civilians, rather than multidimensional peacebuilding goals. Resolution 2155 accompanied an approved budget for UNMISS of \$1.1bn USD per year, highlighting international commitments to protection for women and children, humanitarian personnel, human rights defenders, and displaced civilians in PoC sites and IDP camps.^[xvii]

The updated mandate also urged creation of an early warning system, and mechanisms to support an environment for the safe return of IDPs and refugees to their homes. Prior to December 2013, the Joint Mission Analysis Center (JMAC) was helping UNMISS develop early warning systems. JMAC had provided information to UNMISS that indicated a high crisis risk in the days leading to 15 December 2013.^[xviii] A UN Office of Internal Oversight Services report suggests that UNMISS failed to take action on this information. Irrespective of JMAC information, it is the job of the SRSG to remain well-informed of major political developments and to keep the SG and UNSC abreast of likely developments. This did not occur.

A Stimson Center report cites that in 2014, UNMISS responded immediately in less than ten percent of security incidents, one of the lowest response rates among all UN missions.^[xix] In parallel to barriers to translating security warnings into action, UNMISS has also faced challenges in supporting IDP returns, in part because UN troops are consumed by the immediate issue of protecting civilians from attacks by government forces and other armed factions in and around the PoC sites.

To complement the UNMISS mandate, in March 2015 the UN Security Council established the Panel of Experts on South Sudan to identify individuals and groups committing violence, prolonging the conflict, and violating peace efforts. The Panel of Experts was created to support the South Sudan Sanctions Committee, tasked to design a UN sanctions regime against "those who threaten the peace, security or stability" of the country.^[xx]

UNMISS Before the War

UNMISS has its origins in the abrupt termination of UNMIS in July 2011 when South Sudan gained independence. At the time, the United Nations Security Council had hoped UNMIS would remain in the “three areas” following South Sudan’s independence, despite the expiry of UNMIS’s mandate at that time and the oft-expressed intent of the Government of Sudan (GoS) to close the mission at that point, but was obliged to extract the mission rapidly when the GoS insisted on closing it down.^[xxi] During its draw down, UNMIS transferred some of its troops and assets to UNMISS and UNISFA (which deployed, in parallel, to the Abyei Area).

South Sudan was unusual in that it gained its independent sovereign status with a Chapter VII UN mission on its territory, by its own invitation. As discussed above, UNMISS was not deployed to implement a peace agreement, but to implement a multi-dimensional mandate centered on consolidating a South Sudanese state that could provide security to its citizens.^[xxii] Contrary to the expectations of many South Sudanese, the UN forces were not deployed to defend their territory from purported northern Sudanese military aggression, and UNMISS did not play any role in the border war between Sudan and South Sudan in April 2012 or the negotiations that followed its aftermath. Instead, the AU High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) facilitated these talks. The sole case of UNMISS involvement was provision of logistical support to the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mission (JBVMM) set up by the two governments, though UNISFA provided the primary support.

UNMISS faced the first major challenge to its credibility in December 2011, when Lou Nuer youth-led attacks on Murle civilians in Pibor Country, Jonglei State, triggered the deadliest inter-tribal clashes for 20 years.^[xxiii] Though impossible to confirm, some estimates suggest the violence killed 3,000 and displaced 140,000 people.^[xxiv] Warning of the violence came when a column of 8,000 Lou Nuer youth began moving towards Murle dry season settlements. UNMISS had 400 peacekeepers stationed in the area, which the mission increased to 1200 – half the country-wide combat-ready peacekeeping force. However, the scale and unpredictability of the attacks that ensued across Jonglei – an area the size of Bangladesh – meant that UNMISS could do little beyond giving early warning to civilians, although on occasion it did return fire on attackers.^[xxv] This was the first situation in which UNMISS was required to fulfill its protection mandate. Its response, confined by capacity constraints, motivated government and public accusations that the mission had failed in its responsibilities.

It is important to note that the Jonglei crisis was not purely a “local level” tribal dispute, but one driven by political rivalries in national government.^[xxvi] UNMISS’s impotence in taking a stand against political manipulation of tensions on the ground reinforced perceptions that UNMISS was unable to engage politically and was, at worst, partial towards the government. While supporting the disarmament campaign that followed, UNMISS also remained silent on alleged SPLA human rights abuses during the campaign.^[xxvii] In a similar vein, when in December 2012 the SPLA shot down an UNMISS helicopter, the Special Representative of the Secretary General, Hilde Johnson, first announced that the incident was an accident, rather than standing up to the government for a serious violation of the Status of Forces Agreement. The United Nations Secretary General eventually over-ruled this statement and condemned the SPLA, but the initial response further weakened UNMISS’s political credibility.^[xxviii]

Its political weaknesses became most evident when UNMISS failed to anticipate the December 2013 crisis. Again, the mission did not take a political stand as the internal dispute in the SPLA gathered force in the months leading up to the violence. UNMISS then failed to play a role in mediating the first of many ceasefire agreements in January and February 2014. This set the scene for the shift in the UNMISS mandate.

UNMISS in Wartime

While UNMISS has sustained accusations of political weakness throughout its lifetime, when civil war erupted in December 2013 it became a qualitatively different type of mission, which could arguably lay claim to innovations in civilian protection.

In the first days of the conflict, UNMISS took the unprecedented step of opening the doors of its bases to civilians fleeing physical attack. Few contest this saved thousands of lives. It also represented a shift away from past inaction and failings in addressing immediate threats to civilians - UNAMIR in Rwanda and UNPROFOR in Bosnia offering grave precedents. However, the swift creation of Protection of Civilians (PoC) sites steered UNMISS into uncharted territory.

Neither the mission nor other observers of the crisis anticipated the speed at which civilians fled their communities. Nor did they envisage that 20 months later, in September 2015, 189,610 civilians would remain on six PoC sites on UNMISS bases. [\[xxix\]](#) The size and persistence of the camps poses myriad political, legal and practical challenges for UNMISS. Since December 2013, UNMISS has experienced armed invasions onto PoC sites, causing civilian and force contingent casualties; [\[xxx\]](#) it has faced government accusations of harboring rebels; and it has faced legal difficulties in defining whether the UN or GRSS has criminal jurisdiction over the population it shelters.

While UNMISS took decisive action in the protection domain, it took a back seat in political processes. Instead, within days of the outbreak of violence, the foreign ministers of Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD) member states, the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, and the UN Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan flew to Juba. The Chairperson of the AU High Level Implementation Panel was absent only due to the funeral of former President Nelson Mandela, and was represented by his Chief of Staff. The UN SRSG for South Sudan was not involved in this delegation. [\[xxxi\]](#) In January 2014, IGAD began negotiations between the GRSS and the SPLM-in-Opposition led by Riek Machar. Formal negotiations began on January 6, 2014, [\[xxxii\]](#) and resulted on January 23 in the first of a series of cease-fire agreements agreed and broken. [\[xxxiii\]](#) UNMISS and the SRSG were not included in this critical initiative.

The exclusion of UNMISS from the IGAD-led mediation led to a rare situation where mediators sought to facilitate a ceasefire without the involvement of the UN mission that would logically be the implementing partner, especially for monitoring and civilian protection provisions. The IGAD mediators' proposals were for the AU to provide military observers to monitor any agreement, subsequently augmented by an African "Protection and Deterrent Force" to protect those monitors. The construction of a mechanism parallel to the UN raised eyebrows. Indeed, when the AU proposed giving the UN responsibility for providing logistical support to the ceasefire monitors, international partners vetoed the proposal, showing a lack of confidence in the UN.

Despite expanding to "IGAD Plus," which brought other African stakeholders and international actors (China, EU, Norway, US, UK) into the process, Deputy Special Representative Moustapha Soumare explained that the Security Council had not given UNMISS the mandate "to be fully part of it," and that the mandate instead focuses on protection and the humanitarian situation. Soumare's comments evidenced frustration about UNMISS's inability to engage in the peace process, given its potential role in agreement implementation. [\[xxxiv\]](#) Thus, UNMISS found itself caught in the middle of a political-military process without having strong influence.

Proposed Protection and Deterrent Force

IGAD and the African Union envisaged the "Protection and Deterrent Force" (PDF) as a peace support operation that could offer a mechanism that would deter offensive military action by South Sudanese armed actors. The rationale was that by bringing in troops from neighboring countries (including Ethiopia, Kenya and Rwanda), South Sudanese belligerents would fear that any attack on PDF troops would constitute an attack on the national armies of powerful neighbors, which would intervene forcibly with reinforcements. Deployment of the PDF would have meant two overlapping PSOs on South Sudanese territory, with different rules of engagement and command structures. The final proposal sought to resolve this problem by folding the addition troops into UNMISS, under a single command structure. This compromise required that the UNMISS Force Commander would be from a neighboring country (Ethiopia). This arrangement

would have also provided the opportunity for Uganda to withdraw its troops from South Sudan, which it deployed early in the conflict to support GRSS.^[xxxv]

In a press release, IGAD stated that its goal was to help parties “find a peaceful end to the crisis” and “negotiate and work towards an inclusive political dialogue for national reconciliation and healing.”^[xxxvii] Despite the presence of IGAD observers, the parties have broken multiple ceasefire agreements. Phase II of the peace talks began in April 28, 2014 but only lasted three months due to continued violence and violations of the cease-fire. An additional round of talks beginning in January 2015 failed to reach an agreement by March, and were suspended again. On August 26, 2015, Salva Kiir signed the “Compromise Peace Agreement”, under intense threat of sanctions, but it remains to be seen if the agreement will actually result in a unified, transitional government or have reduce violence in the country.^[xxxviii]

The African Union

Alongside UN and IGAD efforts, the African Union has also been involved in South Sudan’s conflicts in several areas. In 2009 it tasked the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel on Sudan and South Sudan (AUHIP) with facilitating the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. AUHIP succeeded the AU High-Level Panel on Darfur. In 2010 AUHIP took on the additional task of facilitating negotiations between the GoS and the SPLM on post-referendum issues. These issues included “disputes over oil, security, citizenship, assets, and their common border.”^[xxxix] AUHIP also engaged the GRSS and SPLM in efforts to resolve their internal political dispute in 2013, but stepped aside in favor of IGAD leading the mediation effort in the aftermath of the December 2013 crisis. In support of the IGAD-led mediation, the AU played an active in advocating for AU military observers, and for a robust “Protection and Deterrent Force” alongside or under the command of UNMISS.

In addition, the AU Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) created the Commission of Inquiry on South Sudan (AUCISS) on December 30, 2013, to investigate alleged atrocities by both government forces and Machar’s armed group.^[xl] The commission’s report was completed in late 2014 and was originally planned for release in January 2015. However, the report was held back for a further six months, due to fears it would derail peace talks. In July 2015, the AU released the long-awaited report, but only shared it with GRSS, rather than making it public.^[xli]

To support UNMISS, AUPSC has called for unfettered access for the mission to fulfill its responsibilities. Furthermore, the AUPSC has endorsed the South Sudan Sanctions Committee and called it to name individuals who threaten peace.^[xlii] The AU also designated a High Representative to South Sudan, currently President of Mali Alpha Oumar Konaré, to coordinate with UN and IGAD representatives.

II. Key Issues, Dilemmas, and Lessons

1. Protection of civilians on and off UNMISS bases

Although resolution 2155 deemed protection of civilians the mission’s top priority, UNMISS has limited capacity to protect civilians and deter attacks by opposing armed groups. The PoC sites are direct targets of attack, and militia groups continue to attack civilians. The mission has been forced to prioritize the immediate task of protecting persons seeking shelter, rather than devote resources to addressing the broader security situation in South Sudan and accessing other communities at risk, who constitute much larger numbers of civilians than those within the PoC sites. In any context, of which South Sudan is an extreme case, fulfilling the protection mandate brings major capacity and feasibility challenges for UN peacekeeping operations. Furthermore, despite the UNMISS military presence, the PoC sites remain vulnerable to outside attacks. In instances such as the April 2014 attack on the base in Bor, Jonglei State, armed civilians and militia elements have penetrated the bases and murdered civilians.^[xliii] These attacks have motivated responses which target the credibility of UNMISS. For example, government officials have

blamed UN troops for “provoking” attacks, and harboring rebels in the PoC sites, provoking government forces to act in self-defense.^[xliii] These instances have undermined the ability of UN troops to guarantee peace and security for civilians.

2. Humanitarian response in armed conflict

Managing humanitarian response in the midst of acute armed conflict is one of UNMISS’s most pressing challenges. While humanitarian agencies, such as the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) and the World Food Program manage aid delivery, UNMISS faces two issues. First, it is a joint integrated mission, which means that UNOCHA officially falls under the purview of the Special Representative of the Secretary General, and cannot completely separate itself from the strategies of the broader mission. This places UNMISS in a difficult relationship with humanitarian agencies like UNOCHA. It means the mission may have to temper its political strategy in order to ensure humanitarian access for UNOCHA. It also means UNOCHA risks compromising humanitarian principles if it becomes too closely associated with the military contingents of UNMISS. Secondly, UNMISS is responsible for direct oversight of a large number of people requiring aid on its bases, with demand on and off these sites reaching extreme magnitudes. According to the UNOCHA Financial Tracking System, which tracks humanitarian crisis funding, South Sudan required more than 1.63 billion USD for assistance in 2015, while donors earmarked 53 percent (869.4 million USD) of that required funding.^[xlvi] Funding for South Sudan in reality has been slightly higher than donors have provided for other crises in Africa – 2015 donor funding for the Democratic Republic of Congo covers 44 percent of need (308 million USD) and for the Central African Republic 37 percent of need (227.6 million USD).^[xlv] However, funding gaps present UNMISS with a major protection challenge. This accompanies difficulties of reaching populations in need outside bases, challenging adherence to the humanitarian principle of impartiality (dispensing relief on the basis of need alone).

3. Security of UN and humanitarian personnel

Armed groups have also attacked and killed UNMISS troops and personnel. For example, in August 2014, armed elements (unidentified, at the time of writing) shot down an UNMISS helicopter in Unity State, killing three personnel.^[xlvii] Humanitarian actors have also been targets. According to the 2014 Aid Worker Security Report, South Sudan experienced the third highest number of attacks on humanitarian workers, following Afghanistan and Syria.^[xlviii] Targeting of UN and humanitarian personnel suggests that some parties to the conflict no longer consider the UN as neutral. This potentially undermines the legitimacy of the UN presence.

4. Mandate implementation in parallel to a mediation process led by a separate entity

While the UNMISS mandate stipulates extensive responsibilities in civilian protection, it does not provide for a role in the political process, which is critical to ending the conflict. With IGAD leading the mediation process, UNMISS has been marginal to negotiations, although the mission must manage the consequences of the peace process on the ground. The mission should also be able to provide negotiators with valuable insight into what is feasible concerning military operations and the security context. Where missions deploy in the absence of a peace to keep, it is especially important for them to play a role in political processes.

5. Managing relationships with host government

In line with the cardinal principles of peacekeeping, UNMISS deployed with the consent of the Government of South Sudan.^[xlviii] UNMISS could no longer rely on this consent when violence in December 2013 broke out and the government became a belligerent in the conflict. Since then, the Sudan People’s Liberation Army has committed multiple violations to the Status of Forces Agreement through acts of harassment, coercion, physical assault, arrest, and detention of UN personnel.^[xlix] The Government of South Sudan and

its armed forces have also obstructed delivery of humanitarian assistance. ¹³ UNMISS must manage its complex relationship with the government to encourage cooperation. Because the government has become a party to the conflict, UNMISS has lost an important partner for activities central to conflict mitigation, such as training national police, conducting joint operations with the national military, and ensuring access to all parts of the country.

6. Mandate implementation where there is no peace to keep

UNMISS presents a case of a mission that struggles to implement a mandate because of acute security and humanitarian challenges, in a context where there is no peace to keep. Despite the fact that peace negotiations have produced ceasefires and other agreements, the conflict parties have persistently violated these. This situation places UNMISS under extreme pressure and uncertainty, which obstructs its ability to protect civilians optimally and facilitate agreement implementation. This situation also brings an increased risk of armed groups targeting mission personnel.

7. Coordination amongst humanitarian actors

In a country where there are hundreds of humanitarian actors with varying operational systems, interests, and mandates, coordination amongst those groups is vital to effective military operations, aid delivery, and other sorts of response. In December 2013 – before the outbreak of the crisis – the UNMISS Humanitarian Country Team developed guidelines for coordination between humanitarian actors and the mission. ¹⁴ Since UNMISS has been preoccupied with protecting civilians on its bases, many communities have had to provide their own security autonomously. These communities lack basic resources. This situation requires UNMISS and UNOCHA to continuously re-assess their strategies for reaching cut-off communities.

III. Literature Review

Reports/Scholarly Work

Blanchard, Lauren, “The Crisis in South Sudan,” Congressional Research Service, January 9, 2014

This report provides an easy-to-understand background on the conflict and uses interesting graphics and maps for illustrations. It offers an overview of conflict actors and their motives/goals, including those of government officials, army leaders, political opposition figures, and local actors (at the state level). Blanchard highlights aspects of the conflict analysts commonly overlook, such as small arms proliferation and the status of oil production and sales.

Caruso, Raul, and Roberto Ricciuti, “Can UN troops influence economic development? The case of South Sudan,” Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, July 10, 2013

This blog post references a study ([see paper here](#)) analyzing the relationship between peacekeeping troop presence and cereal production in South Sudan, in the first empirical study of peacekeeping operations and improved economic security in the country. Caruso and Ricciuti’s research found that the presence of peacekeepers improved economic development and access to food in South Sudan, which is important because the country has extreme food insecurity issues. The post presents an interesting aspect of peace operations, improving economic stability, which is rarely discussed.

Giffen, Alison, Aditi Gorur, Jok Madut Jok, and Augustino Ting Mayai (2014), ““Will They Protect Us For The Next 10 Years?” Challenges Faced by UN Peacekeeping Mission,” The Stimson Center and the SUDD Institute

Researchers from the Stimson Center, in conjunction with the SUDD Institute, produced this timely report on challenges facing UNMISS just as the humanitarian crisis and PoC sites began to worsen in South Sudan. Through conducting field research and ground interviews with civilians, the report presents relevant concerns of the most vulnerable populations and analyzes future challenges that will arise as UNMISS extends its stay in the country. The report also outlines current risks to civilians in South Sudan, including those inside, around, and in the surrounding areas of the PoC sites.

Hemmer, Jort. “We Are Laying the Groundwork for Our Own Failure”: The UN Mission in South Sudan and Its Civilian Protection Strategy: An Early Assessment, Clingendael Institute and Noref Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Center, January 31, 2013

With a pessimistic tone reverberating throughout, this policy brief is useful to identify parts of UNMISS' mandate that analysts and experts believe are too expansive, too ambitious, and unrealistic. The brief suggests that UNMISS capabilities should be assessed realistically and protection activities pared down accordingly, while keeping in mind that UNMISS is not permanent. It is important to note that this brief was written in January 2013, almost 11 months prior to the outbreak of violence in the more recent conflict between Salva Kiir and Riek Machar.

Lilly, Damien, “Protection of Civilians sites: a new type of displacement settlement?” *Humanitarian Exchange Magazine*, September 2014

Written by a former Senior Advisor on Protection of Civilians for UNMISS, this short article outlines the development of PoCs, a new type of displacement settlement. Lilly describes pressing issues facing UNMISS such as delivering aid, maintaining minimum humanitarian standards, and providing protection for civilians seeking shelter at the sites. The article also highlights that mixing traditional military and civilian roles (humanitarian actors) may have implications for perceptions of neutrality and independence, which may have future repercussions.

Malan, Mark, and Charles T Hunt. “Between a Rock and a Hard Place: The UN and the Protection of Civilians in South Sudan.” *ISS Paper 275. Institute for Security Studies*, November 2014.

This paper sheds light on the transition of UNMISS' mandate from focusing on state-building to prioritizing protecting civilians. It is a useful source to understand how unique this transition was in the history of peacekeeping, from the establishment of the mission to its revised responsibilities and roles after the outbreak of violence in December 2013. With increasing attacks on UNMISS personnel and challenges to carrying out its protection mandate, negotiation and mediation efforts must continue. The paper emphasizes the need for a political process supported by 'robust UN engagement' so that parties can reach a peace agreement and form a committed transitional government.

Mamiya, Ralph and Haidi Willmot, “Early warning, the protection of civilians and United Nations peacekeeping operations,” *African Security Review*, May 2013

This article provides an overview of early warning mechanisms, how they have evolved, and how they are used in peacekeeping operations to protect civilians. The authors use UNMISS as a case study to illustrate the mission's approach to early warning: creating a system, in conjunction with an overarching national-led initiative called the Government of South Sudan Conflict Early Warning and Early Response System, that focuses on “integrated information collection and analysis through an institutionalized database.” This approach differs from what other missions have done, such as MONUSCO in DRC.

“South Sudan: A Civil War by Any Other Name,” *International Crisis Group*, April 10, 2014

This report was ICG's first major publication on South Sudan since violence erupted in December 2014. It gives an overview of unaddressed issues from South Sudan's war of independence, the political factions and armed groups that splintered off from the government, and the effect of violence on civilians. The report is also useful to understand regional dynamics concerning Uganda and Sudan, and speculates what would happen if Uganda's intervention to support the SPLA led to Sudan intervening on behalf of Machar's faction.

“South Sudan: Keeping Faith with the IGAD Peace Process,” International Crisis Group, July 27, 2015

ICG's report is useful for understanding regional dynamics and their implications on the IGAD peace process. It sheds light on the rivalry between Uganda and Ethiopia for regional influence, as well as the historic friction between Sudan and Uganda. The article also highlights three major challenges for the IGAD process: regional power struggles, centralization of power at the head-of-state level, and the issue of inclusivity and trying to include more people outside of the political elite in the peace process. This report is helpful to understand the high-level political developments of the past two years, rather than digging into human security issues and the implications of violence.

UN/AU/IGAD Official Documents

UN

UN Secretary-General (UNSG), Report of the Secretary-General on South Sudan

- May 17, 2011
- November 2, 2011
- March 7, 2012
- June 26, 2012
- November 8, 2012
- November 26, 2012
- March 8, 2013
- June 20, 2013
- November 8, 2013
- March 6, 2014
- July 25, 2014
- September 30, 2014
- November 18, 2014
- February 17, 2015
- April 29, 2015

“UNMISS Protection of Civilians Strategy – Final Draft Approved by SRSG,” June 4, 2012

Payton Knopf, Andrews Atta-Asamoah, Ann Oosterlinck, and Lucas van de Vondervoort, “Interim report of the Panel of Experts on South Sudan established pursuant to Security Council resolution 2206 (2015),” United Nations Security Council, August 21, 2015

“Flash Human Rights Report on the Escalation of Fighting in Greater Upper Nile, April/May 2015”
UNMISS Human Rights Division, June 29, 2015

“Guidelines for the Coordination between Humanitarian Actors and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan,” UNMISS Humanitarian Country Team, December 6, 2013

IGAD

“Press Statement: IGAD Special Envoys Spearhead the Start of the Political Process in South Sudan,” IGAD, February 5, 2014

“Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities Between the Government of the Republic of Sudan (GRSS) and the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/Army (in Opposition) (SPLM/A in Opposition),” IGAD, January 23, 2014

“Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan,” IGAD, August 17, 2015

AU

“The AU Commission of Inquiry on South Sudan to Undertake Its First Field Mission to Juba,” African Union Press Release, April 22, 2014

“Communiqué,” African Union Peace and Security Council, June 13, 2015

^[i] “UNMISS Facts and Figures,” UNMISS website.

^[ii] “UNMISS Troop Contributing Countries (TCC),” United Nations, May 15, 2015

^[iii] “UNMISS Facts and Figures,” UNMISS website

^[iv] Douglas Johnson (2003), *The Root Causes of Sudan’s Civil Wars: Peace or Truce*, Oxford, James Currey.

^[v] UN doc. S/Res/2132 (2013)

^[vi] Ibid.

^[vii] UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary General on South Sudan, 21 August 2015, UN doc. S/2015/655.

^[viii] During UNMIS’ existence, the SPLM often demanded more effective UN operations to respond to alleged northern aggression and, at times, accused UNMIS of not living up to its responsibilities. Matthew Arnold and Matthew LeRiche, “South Sudan: From Revolution to Independence,” Oxford University Press: 2013

^[ix] Paraphrasing UN doc S/Res/1996: the UNMISS mandate was to “support the Government in peace consolidation and thereby fostering longer-term state building and economic development; assist the Government in exercising its responsibilities for conflict prevention, mitigation, and resolution and protect civilians; and help the authorities in developing capacity to provide security, establishing rule of law, and strengthening the security and justice sectors.” See “UNMISS Mandate,” UNMISS

website:<http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/unmiss/mandate.shtml> (accessed 16 October 2015).

[xi] UN doc S/Res/1996 (2011)

[xii] United Nations Security Council, “Report of the Secretary-General on South Sudan,” November 8, 2012. Also to note: At the time, the AU was in the early stages of developing the regional task force to counter the LRA, to which GRSS would eventually contribute troops.

[xiii] Ibid.

[xiv] UN Security Council, Security Council resolution 2132 (2013)

[xv] “UNMISS enhances security arrangements for civilians seeking refuge on its bases,” UNMISS Press Release

[xvi] UN Secretary-General (UNSG), “Report of the Secretary-General on South Sudan,” 6 March 2014

[xvii] Malan and Hunt note: “...changing a UN operation from a peacebuilding mission to one focused on the protection of civilians (POC) is a radical departure from anything that the UN has attempted in nearly six decades of peacekeeping.” Malan and Hunt, 2014

[xviii] UN Security Council, Security Council resolution 2155 (2014) [on extension of the mandate of the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) until 30 Nov. 2014], May 27, 2014

[xix] Giffen et al., 2014

[xx] “Evaluation of the Implementation and Results of Protection of Civilians Mandates in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations,” UN Office of Internal Oversight Services, March 7, 2014

[xxi] UN Security Council Resolution 2206 (2015), March 3, 2015

[xxii] UN doc S/RES/1997 (2011)

[xxiii] UN Security Council, Resolution 1996 (2011)

[xxiv] Small Arms Survey, “My neighbor, my enemy: Inter-tribal violence in Jonglei,” *Sudan Issue Brief, Human Security Baseline Assessment*, October 2012, p.1.

[xxv] “South Sudan: Briefing on Jonglei violence,” IRIN, February 10, 2012

[xxvi] BBC World Service, Hard Talk: Hilde Johnson – UN Special Representative in South Sudan, 9 February 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00ncfxr> (accessed on 16 October 2015).

[xxvii] Rethinking Jonglei (Juba, South Sudan: PACT and South Sudan Law Society, 2012); See Section II, S”outh Sudan: Jonglei – “We Have Always Been at War”,” *Crisis Group Africa Report N°221*, 22 December 2014, <http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/africa/horn-of-africa/south%20sudan/221-south-sudan-jonglei-we-have-always-been-at-war.pdf> (accessed 16 October 2015).

[xxviii] In June 2012, UNMISS did publish a report on human rights violations in Jonglei State, this did not cover the disarmament campaign. United Nations Mission in South Sudan, *Incidents of Inter-Communal Violence in Jonglei State*, June

2012. <https://unmiss.unmissions.org/Portals/unmiss/Human%20Rights%20Reports/June%202012%20Jonlei%20Report.pdf> (accessed on 16 October 2015).

[xxviii] UN News Centre, “Ban and Security Council condemn fatal shooting down of UN helicopter in South Sudan,” 21 December 2012. http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=43837#.ViE5L_mrTWI (accessed on 16 October 2015).

[xxix] “Protection of Civilians Sites” UNMISS Update, September 7, 2015

[xxx] Radio Tamazuj, “Armed youth, uniformed gunmen attack UN camp in Bor killing 60,” 17 April 2014. <https://radiotamazuj.org/en/article/armed-youth-uniformed-gunmen-attack-un-camp-bor-killing-60> (accessed on 16 October 2015).

[xxxi] One explanation may be that IGAD and the AU viewed the SRSG as insufficiently impartial to play a role in the mediation.

[xxxii] “Press Release – Direct Negotiations Between South Sudanese Parties,” IGAD, January 6, 2014

[xxxiii] “Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities Between the Government of the Republic of Sudan (GRSS) and the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/Army (in Opposition) (SPLM/A in Opposition),” IGAD, January 23, 2014

[xxxiv] “UNMISS admits it will not be part of new mediation mechanism,” Radio Tamazuj, July 17, 2015

[xxxv] In October 2015, there was yet to be a Ugandan withdrawal, although Uganda and GRSS had announced plans for this following an agreement on Ugandan withdrawal in the August 2015 peace agreement.

[xxxvi] “Press Statement: IGAD Special Envoys Spearhead the Start of the Political Process in South Sudan,” IGAD, February 5, 2014

[xxxvii] Stephanie Schwartz, “South Sudan’s leaders just signed a peace deal. Will it work?” The Washington Post, August 27, 2015

[xxxviii] “African Union High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP), The Sudan Tribune

[xxxix] “The AU Commission of Inquiry on South Sudan to Undertake Its First Field Mission to Juba,” African Union Press Release, April 22, 2014

[xl] John Tanza and Karin Zeitvogel, “African Union Finally Releases Report on South Sudan Atrocities,” July 24, 2015

[xli] “Communiqué,” African Union Peace and Security Council, June 13, 2015

[xlii] “South Sudan: UN peacekeeping chief says attack on base sheltering civilians ‘sets dangerous precedent’,” UN News Centre, April 23, 2014, available at: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=47636#.VUOgJ61Viko>

[xliii] Charlton Doki, “Salva Kiir Slams ‘Irresponsible’ Attack on Base in South Sudan,” Voice of America, April 22, 2014

[xliv] “Report of South Sudan 2015,” UN OCHA Financial Tracking Service, accessed August 28, 2015

[\[xlv\]](#) “Democratic Republic of the Congo 2015” and “Central African Republic 2015,” UN OCHA Financial Tracking Service, accessed August 28, 2015

[\[xlvi\]](#) Carl Odera and Gabriela Baczynski, “UN helicopter shot down in South Sudan, Russian owner says,” Reuters, August 26, 2014.

[\[xlvii\]](#) Abby Stoddard, Adele Harmer, and Kathleen Ryou, “Aid Worker Security Report 2014 – Unsafe Passage: Road attacks and their impact on humanitarian operations,” Humanitarian Outcomes, August 2014.

[\[xlviii\]](#) While the United Nations Security Council can invoke Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter to deploy peacekeepers legally without the consent of a government controlling a territory, in practice most missions – however robust – rely on some consent from a host government if they are to operate effectively on the ground.

[\[xlix\]](#) UN Secretary-General (UNSG), “*Report of the Secretary-General on South Sudan*,” 6 March 2014

[\[l\]](#) “Flash Human Rights Report on the Escalation of Fighting in Greater Upper Nile, April/May 2015,” UNMISS Human Rights Division, June 29, 2015

[\[li\]](#) “Guidelines for the Coordination between Humanitarian Actors and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan,” UNMISS Humanitarian Country Team, December 6, 2013

UN Security Council, Resolution 1996 (2011) – establishes UNMISS

UN Security Council, Resolution 2046 (2012) – calls on Sudan and South Sudan to cease hostilities, abide by security mechanisms, and resume negotiations

UN Security Council, Resolution 2057 (2012) – extends mandate one year

UN Security Council, Resolution 2109 (2013) – extends mandate one year

UN Security Council, Resolution 2132 (2013) - increases troops by 5,500 troops and 440 police

UN Security Council, Resolution 2155 (2014) [on extension of the mandate of the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) until 30 Nov. 2014], May 27, 2014 – increases troop strength, reprioritizes mandate to focus on protection of civilians

UN Security Council, Resolution 2187 (2014) – extends mandate for one year

UN Security Council, Resolution 2206 (2015) – condemns all parties for violating cease-fire and threatens sanctions if parties do not reach peace agreement

UN Security Council, Resolution 2223 (2015) – extends mandate until November, 2015

UN Security Council, “Report of the Secretary-General on South Sudan,” November 8, 20