THE UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING MISSION AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN SOUTH SUDAN

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Abstract

This study sets outto explore the extent to which the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)has been able to resolve conflicts in the country. It also examined the challenges to implementing the Protection of CiviliansMandate in South Sudan. Since not much has been written on the aforementioned subjects, therefore, this study seeks to fill these yawning knowledge gaps. The Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the conflict in the Republic of South Sudan has collapsed, leading to a resurgence of widespread hostilities and a severe political crisis. We anchored our analysis on the theory of conflict transformation as espoused by Lederach (2023); Galtung (2000); Young (2010); Botes (2003), and adopted the descriptive research design. The study employed the secondary/qualitative method of data collection, while content analysis was utilized for the analysis of data. Essentially, we discovered that UNMISS has supported informal community-led conflict resolution mechanisms and implemented conflict transformation training and peace dialogue at some of the sites.With regard to sexual and gender-based violence, the mission co- operates with humanitarian partners in order to streamline referral pathways and provide emergency services to the victims. However, access restriction, capacity and resource constraints, among other factors tend to hamper its ability to effectively protect civilians.Consequently, the study recommends among others, the need for closer coordination between IGAD, theAU, the UN security Council, and the Troika on the situation in South Sudan and on strategies to restore order and stability in the country.

Introduction

The persistence of armed conflict in South Sudan has prompted the deployment of United Nations (UN) peacekeeping mission aimed at sustaining peace and facilitating post-conflict recovery. Despite these efforts, the country remains troubled by violence, state fragility and recurring crises. The crisis in South Sudan which erupted on the 13th of December 2013 can be traced to the political dispute between President Salva Kiir and his former deputy, Reik Machar The political struggle between president Kiir and his erstwhile former Vice president Reik Machar degenerated into a complex ethnic affair that has escalated into a civil war which has engulfed South Sudan (Lyman, 2014). This has been exacerbated by the fact that the key protagonists to the conflict come from two dominant ethnic groups in South Sudan (The Sudd Institute, 2014). It should be noted that President Salva Kiir is an ethnic Dinka, while Reik Machar is from the Nuer ethnic group. In all intent and purpose, the crisis in South Sudan has evolved into a bloody ethnic conflagration that is threatening to destabilize not only the country, but also the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) region as a whole.

The Dinka and the Nuer ethnic groups have a long history of conflict in South Sudan. Consequently, the two adversaries to the conflict accuse each other of taking deliberate actions aimed at diminishing the role of the other ethnic group. The faction led by President Salva Kiir has emerged as the dominant force controlling the government and the army, the South Sudanese Peoples'Army (SSPLA), whereas the faction led by Reik Macher is considered to be the rebel faction (Martell, 2014). The fighting between the government troops loyal toPresident Salva Kiir and the rebel faction led by Reik Macher have led to widespread killing of thousands of South Sudanese, and the displacement of over 800,000 people to neighbouring countries such as Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan and Uganda (Chinyanganya& Mhlanga 2015).

A plethora of regional and international actors — including Sudan, Uganda, Ethiopia and Kenya, IGAD, the Troika, the African Union (AU), as well as the EU, China and the UN, have been involved in South Sudan's conflict and peace process. With a significant in-country presence, both in the capital Juba — where it is embedded in each national ministry (Zambakari et al, 2018), as well as in South Sudan's 10 states, the United Nations is a key actor involved on the ground in South Sudan. A large part of its involvement revolves around the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), which was established in 2011 (UNSC, 2011).

Although, having a broader peacebuilding scope, the initial mandate of UNMISS also stipulated several means by which the Mission was to support the South Sudan government in exercising its responsibility for the protection of civilians, including monitoring and reporting on human rights violations and potential threats against the civilian population; advising and assisting the government, military and police in fulfilling its responsibility to protect civilians; deterring violence through proactive deployment and patrols in high risk areas; and within its capabilities and in its areas of deployment, protecting civilians under imminent threat of physical violence (UNSC, 2022).

Many articles have been written on the United Nations and conflict resolution in Africa, but not much has been written on its efforts at consolidating peace and security in South Sudan, via the UNMISS, neither has there been much scholarly works on the obstacles that impede the implementation of the protection of civilians'

mandate. Since not much has been written on the aforementioned subjects, therefore this study seeks to fill these yawning knowledge gaps.

Statement of the Problem

The Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS), has collapsed, leading to a resurgence of widespread hostilities and a severe political crisis (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2025).

Implementation of the R-ARCSS halted in the first quarter of 2025 because of repeated violations from signatory parties and a significant escalation in armed conflict across multiple states. The systematic nature of these violations, including high-level political detentions and renewed military confrontations, point to the breaches of the peace agreement's core tenets (Marsden, 2025).

The political environment is characterized by deadlock. High-ranking opposition members and parliamentarians have been detained. First Vice President Riek Machar, leader of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in-Opposition (SPLM-10), was placed under house arrest in Juba, this action effectively stopped the power-sharing mechanism central to the R-ARCSS.

Renewed and widespread military confrontations between the South Sudan People's Defence Forces (SSPDF) and the SPLM-10 have been reported in the states of Upper Nile, Western Bahr el-Ghazal, Western Equatoria, Unity and Jonglei. Reports indicate that the SSPDF have used improvised incendiary weapons and barrel bombs in Upper Nile State, leading to significant civilian casualties. The renewed conflict has precipitated a humanitarian crisis. Over 125,000 people have been displaced since March 2025, due to armed clash and aerial bombardments, adding to existing large, displaced population. An estimated 9.3 million people, nearly three-quarters of South Sudan's population, required humanitarian assistance in 2025, with 7.7 million facing acute food insecurity (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2025).

The confluence of unresolved political grievances stemming from the R-ARCSS's collapse; active ethnic mobilization; intense elite competition for resources, particularly oil revenues, and significant external interference create a volatile environment. The war in neighbouring Sudan has exacerbated the situation through an influx of weapons and combatants, and the involvement of both the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in South Sudan (Riak, 2025).

The nation's economic collapse has been primarily driven by disruption to oil exports, which is South Sudan's main revenue source. There has been almost a complete cessation of oil moving through South Sudanese pipelines for export as a result of the war. The government's inability to pay salaries, coupled with hyperinflation and soaring food prices, fuel widespread discontent and a desperation among both the civilian population and security forces (RJMEC, 2025).

Research Questions

i. How has the United Nations Mission in South Sudan been able to resolve conflicts in the country?

ii. What are the challenges to implementing the protection of civilians mandate in South Sudan?

Objectives of Study

The study sets out to achieve the following objectives:

i. To examine the extent to which the United Nations Mission in South Sudan has been able to resolve conflicts in the country.

ii. To explore the challenges to implementing the protection of civilians mandate in South Sudan.

Conceptual Clarification

The United Nations (UN)

The term 'United Nations' was coined by United States President Franklin D. Roosevelt during the Second World War. It first appeared in the Declaration by *United Nations* of 1 January 1942, which put forth a pledge by 26 nations to fight together against the Axis powers. Following deliberations in 1944 by representatives from China, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and the United States in Washington DC, delegates from 50 countries met the next year in San Francisco at the United Nations Conference on International organization. With a firm commitment to end "the scourge of war" they drew up the Charter of the United Nations, signed on 26 June, 1945 (Poland, which was not represented at the Conference, signed the Charter later and so became one of the original 51 member states (UN Department of Public Information, 2011).

The United Nations officially came into existence on 24 October, 1945 with the ratification of the Charter by China, France, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, the United States and a majority of other signatories.

The Charter of the United Nations: Purposes and Principles

The Charter of the United Nations is the constitutive instrument of the UN, setting out the rights and obligations of member states, and establishing its principal organs and procedures. The Charter consists of a preamble and 111 articles grouped into 19 chapters. Of these, chapter 1 sets forth the purposes and principles of the United Nations; chapter 2 establishes the criteria for UN membership; Chapter 3 names the six principal UN organs; Chapters 4-15 define the functions and powers of these organs; chapters 6-17 relate the United Nations to extant international law; and chapters 18-19 define the amendment and ratification of the Charter (UN Department of Public Information, 2011).

As set forth in the UN Charter (1945), the purposes of the United Nations are:

i. To maintain international peace and security;

ii. To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples;

iii. To cooperate in solving international economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems and in promoting respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms;

iv. To be a centre for harmonizing the actions in attaining these common ends.

In turn, the United Nations acts in accordance with the following principles;

i. All members are to fulfil in good faith their Charter obligations;

ii. They are to settle their international disputes by peaceful means and without endangering international peace, security and justice;

iii. They are to refrain from the threat or use of force against any other state.

The United Nations Peacekeeping Initiatives in Africa.

A historical background of UN Missions in Africa is essential to understanding the context of the current missions in the continent. Thus, between 1948 and 1978, the UN deployed only thirteen peacekeeping missions around the globe. The first armed peacekeeping mission occurred during the Suez Crisis in 1956 (Adebajo, 2011).

The UN charter of 1945 had not mentioned peacekeeping, so Swedish UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld often referred to it as "chapter six and a half" because it fell between the UN Charter's chapter six (peaceful methods for resolving conflicts) and chapter seven (peace enforcement) (Adebajo, 2011). The first peace-enforcement mission took place in the Congo between 1960 and 1964. This "first generation" of traditional peacekeeping interpreted the rules in interstate wars to allow for deploying an interposing force based on the consent of warring parties to maintain an agreed peace, with the peacekeepers maintaining strict neutrality (James, 1990).

During the "second generation" of UN peacekeeping between 1988 and 1993, twenty UN peacekeeping missions were launched. Africa again innovated "multidimensional" peacekeeping in Namibia, in which tasks such as human rights monitoring, training police forces, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of soldiers, and strengthening state institutions became part of the UN's mandates (Weiss & Daws, 2007).

UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali's *An Agenda for Peace* was a landmark document published in 1992 on the tools and techniques of peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding for a post-Cold War era. In the same year, Boutros-Ghali established a Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) at the UN Secretariat in New York to oversee peacekeeping missions, while the rival Department of Political Affairs (DPA) continued to focus on peace and mediation efforts (Boutros-Ghali, 1995).

The "third generation" of UN peacekeeping emerged in 1999 with the deployment of peacekeepers to the DRC, Sierra Leone, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kosovo, andEast Timor, and later in Liberia, Burundi, and Sudan (Weiss & Daws, 2007). Many of these missions, however, failed to heed the conditions set out in the Brahimi Reports, which sought to strengthen the UN's peacekeeping capacity and suggested innovations such as preapproving funds for peacekeeping missions; strengthening communication between UN headquarters in New York and the field, among others. Consequently, the pace of deployment continued to be lethargic; peacekeepers brought poor equipments to missions; the DPKO struggled to cope with managing the missions; and the UN Secretariat often failed to stand up to the Security Council's sometimes quixotic demands (Weiss & Daws, 2007).

Theoretical Perspective

This study is anchored on the theory of conflict transformation articulated by Lederach (2023), Galtung (2000), Young (2010), and Botes (2003). The departure point of the conflict transformation theory is that conflict is endemic in society. Conflict transformation then is about transforming the very systems, structures, and relationships which give rise to violence and injustice. It addresses underlying structures, cultures, and institutions that encourage and condition violent political and social conflict.

Conflict transformation is a holistic and multi-faceted approach to managing violent conflict in all its phases (Galtung, 2000). The goal of conflict transformation is therefore to establish positive peace, (Young, 2010). The term signifies an ongoing process of change in the relations, behavior, attitude and structures, from negative to positive. Thus, the theory views peace as centred and rooted in the quality of relationships.

The theory's assumptions are as follow: conflict transformation does not suggest that we simply eliminate or control conflict, but rather recognize and work with its 'dialectic nature'; at the personal level, conflict transformation involves the pursuit of awareness, growth and commitment to change which may occur through the recognition of fear, anger, grief and bitterness; certain orientations can become 'cultures of violence' or a manifestation of 'cultural violence', which conflict transformation aims to convert into "culture of peace", thereby transforming material and structural conditions, Botes, (2003)

This theory is suitable for the study due to its capacity to elucidate the role of the United Nations in resolving conflicts in South Sudan. Thus following the outbreak of civil war in South Sudan in December 2013, the Security Council shifted the UNMISS mandate focus from "consolidation of peace" to four key areas, which remained largely consistent since 2014. The latest mandate of UNMISS as provided in resolution 2729 (2024) included:

- Protection of civilians
- Creating conditions conducive to the delivery of humanitarian assistance
- Supporting the implementation of the peace agreement and
- Monitoring, investigating and reporting on violations of international humanitarian and human rights laws.OIOS (2025).

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive research design. Qualitative data obtained from secondary sources like journals, textbooks, newspapers, magazines and internet materials were used, while the method of data analysis is content analysis.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The United Nations Mission in South Sudan and its Conflict Resolution Efforts

The United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) was established by the Security Council Resolution 1996 on 8 July 2011; in order to support this fledgling state in consolidating peace and security; establishing conditions for development; governing efficiently and democratically; and in establishing good neighbourly relations (Stamnes, 2015).

Although having a broader peacebuilding scope, the initial mandate of UNMISS also stipulated several means by which the mission was to support the South Sudan government in exercising its responsibility for the protection of civilians, including monitoring and reporting on human rights violations, among others.

This was based on the assumption that the government and authorities would be willing partners in enhancing civilian protection and the respect for human rights in the new state. However, this assumption proved to be too optimistic. As events have unfolded, not only non-state actors, but also state authorities, seeking to marginalize ethnic groups and

maintain power for an exclusionary elite, have perpetrated violence against civilians, with the government failing badly in its protection responsibilities (Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, 2015).

The violent crisis in December 2013 resulted in UNMISS taking steps unprecedented in the history of civilian protection. This crisis was the culmination of increasing tensions within the ruling party, the SPLM. On the first day of the party's National Liberation Council, on 14 December, disagreement between President Salva Kiir, the former Vice-President, Riek Machar, and other senior party leaders came to a head, resulting in Machar and others, not returning the following day, when important decisions were to be made. On the evening of 15 December, fighting broke out in the barracks of the Presidential Guard in Juba, and the President declared that this constituted an attempted coup d'état by forces loyal to Machar. The fighting spread quickly to other military installations as well as residential areas, and resulted in large-scale killings and abuses. Thousands of civilians and individuals deserting from the security forces, fled and sought refuge within UNMISS bases.The tension continued to rise, with segments of the forces taking sides with or against the President, and spread to the states of Upper Nile, Unity, Central Equatoria and Jonglei, resulting in even more civilian casualties and refugees. (S/2014/158, Report of the Secretary-General on South Sudan).

The crisis also led to a deterioration of the relationship between UNMISS and the South Sudanese government. The UN was accused of taking sides in the conflict and senior government officials made hostile public remarks about the mission. There were several anti-UN demonstrations; UN personnel were harassed, threatened and had their movements obstructed. There were also serious Status-of-Force Agreement violations, including several attempts by SPLA soldiers to forcibly enter the UN compound in Bor (Stamnes, 2015).

The backdrop of this was the decision by the UN mission, faced with the threat of large-scale civilian killings, to open the gates of its compounds in Juba, Bor, Akobo, Bentiu, Malakal and Melut to the fleeing masses. The military engineers and humanitarian partners moved swiftly to ensure a minimum of facilities within the compounds. By March 2014, 85,000 persons had sought refuge at eight UNMISS compounds, and one year later, the number had grown to more than 166, 000 (O'Brien, 2015). Needless to say, this had placed a huge strain on the resources of the mission and meant a shift in focus as well as a reallocation of resources. The immediate need for additional forces to protect civilians and assist in the provision of humanitarian assistance was secured through inter-mission cooperation mandated by Security Council Resolution 2132 of 24 December 2015, raising the troop level of UNMISS to 12,500 personnel and the police component to 1,323 personnel (Stamnes, 2015).Consequently, the mandate of UNMISS was formally reprioritized towards the protection of civilians, human rights monitoring, creating conditions for the delivery of humanitarian assistance, and supporting the implementation of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement. Among these responsibilities, the protection of civilians had utmost priority (Stamnes, 2015).

The Protection of Civilians' Mandate

At the start of the civil war in South Sudan in mid-December 2013, fear of massive human rights violations led UNMISS bases to open their gates to tens of thousands of civilians who had escaped the fighting (UN Security Council, 2013). Within two weeks, 57,500 people were sheltering at 10 UN bases (UN Office for the

Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2014). By the end of 2014, UNMISS POC sites were sheltering over 100,000 civilians. As the fighting continued in 2015, this number rose to approximately 200,000. The number remained stable at around this level throughout 2016 (Dònges, 2016).

It is important to note that the POC sites were not planned, but the result of an urgent humanitarian need as a result of large number of civilians looking to the UN to keep them safe. Consequently, each UN location dealt with the challenges differently. In all cases, the military component of the mission was given responsibility for protection against external violence, while UN police personnel were responsible for internal security (Dònges, 2016).Subsequently, UNMISS developed a three-tiered protectionstrategy:(a) protection through dialogue and political engagement;(b) protection from physical harm; and(c) the establishment of a protective environment, ranging from enforcing the rule of law to creating conditions conducive to return (UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, 2015).

In spite of the UN's efforts, the POC sites were far from safe. The February 2016 attack on the Malakal POC, and the July 2016 events in Juba, were not the first times that POC sites in South Sudan had come under attack. The Malakal is a town in northern South Sudan. It is at the heart of the conflict zone. The Malakal POC site was host to around 48,000 civilians and unique in that it accommodated IDPs from three ethnic groups: Dinka, Nuer and Shilluk.

In the evening of 16 February 2016, two Sudan People's Liberation Army in Government (SPLA-IG) soldiers tried to smuggle ammunition into the POC site. Consequently, small-scale inter-communal clashes broke out, followed by more intense violence the next evening. Shilluk youth attacked the Dinka quarters in the POC site. The next morning, the local authorities accused UNMISS of failing to protect civilians, and SPLA-IG soldiers breached the fence and entered the site. UNMISS was unable to hold the SPLA-IG back and its commanders were reluctant to use lethal force. For several hours, the SPLA-IG and Dinka fighters controlled much of the POC site. They attacked Nuer and Shilluk civilians and burned down houses. More than 30 IDPs were killed, 123 injured, and about one-third of the site was destroyed before UNMISS finally expelled the attackers in the afternoon (Center for Civilians in Conflict, 2016).

Events in Juba

At the beginning of the conflict, some 37,000 IDPs found refuge in two POC sites at the UNMISS civilian and military headquarters, known as UN House in Juba. During intense fighting on 8-11 July 2016, civilians, UN personnel and premises, and the POC sites came under attack. An additional 5,000 civilians fled to the Tomping UN base near Juba airport. Attack helicopters flew over the UN bases, while artillery and gunfire hit UN bases and POC sites.Towards the end of the fighting, there were widespread reports of targeted killings, organized rape and beating, looting of civilian premises and harassment—often of non-Dinka, along ethnic lines (UNMISS, 2016).

Even though these horrendous events often took place in the immediate vicinity of UNMISS camps and POC sites, it did not respond and largely complied with the restrictions on movement imposed by the government at the onset of the fighting. In some cases, the UN soldiers reportedly stood by and watched (UNMISS, 2016). In the aftermath, the UN reported 73 confirmed civilian deaths, but believed the death toll to be much higher, and

217 documented cases of rape (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2016).

Challenges to Implementing the Protection of Civilians'Mandate in South Sudan

The POC mandate has become increasingly important in recent years despite remaining a controversial issue. The mandate has become central to the *raison d'être* of most UN peacekeeping operations. The POC mandate requires operations to "protect civilians, particularly those under imminent threat of physical violence." Peacekeeping operations with this mandate are authorized by the Security Council to "use all necessary means or actions," including the use of deadly force in implementing this order (United Nations, 2015). Nevertheless, there have been some serious concerns regarding the failure of some missions to effectively fulfil this mandate.

An example is an attack that took place in South Sudan's capital where 73 civilians were killed (Human Rights Watch, 2016). Civilians were raped and killed despite their frantic pleas for help to UN peacekeepers stationed less than a mile away that went unanswered (Gladstone, 2016). The incident is not the first of its kind and has laid bare the strictures placed upon peacekeeping that contribute to their failures to fulfil their mandates effectively.

In the light of the above, this section discusses some of the numerous challenges which have hampered the ability of UNMISS to effectively protect civilians. First, is the access restrictions imposed on the mission which has impeded its ability to execute its POC mandate. Second, is the indeterminate nature of the cessation of hostilities which has often forced the mission into a reactive mode as opposed to being proactive. Third, is the capacity and resource constraints UNMISS has experienced when protecting civilians. Fourth, is the mismatch between mandate, capacity and expectations, which directly or indirectly limit the effectiveness of the UN Police in implementing its protection mandate.

Access Restrictions

Restrictions on access and freedom of movement has been a major challenge for UNMISS in attempts to protect civilians.

These restrictions can be considered from two perspectives: (1) Those based on geography and (2) Those imposed by the government and fighting forces.First access constraints are dire, particularly in countries with difficult topography, poor infrastructure and climatic conditions (Johnson, 2016). Muhumure (2017)noted that there is a very high deficit of infrastructure in the country, i.e., poor road networks. This becomes very problematic during the rainy season as a greater part of the country gets cut off, making those populations hard to reach. This in turn complicates and interferes with the communication channels of UNMISS.

There are restrictions that have been imposed on the mission by both parties in the conflict, particularly the South Sudanese government. These restrictions are considered a clear violation of the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) that was signed by both the government and mission. Mahumre (2017), provides the following example:

"To move from Juba to Bentiu, which is north of the country, you have to go through over 90 checkpoints. Some of those are government checkpoints, some are opposition checkpoints and some of them are by the armed groups... On countless times, the UNMISS forces have been stopped from going to places where reports are coming that civilians are being harassed or targeted. We face this problem every

single day, where our forces are stopped from proceeding (Mahumre, interview, 2017)".

The nature of cessation of hostilities

The United Nations Security Council's meeting, which was held on March 23, 2017, emphasized its call for all parties in South Sudan to adhere to the ceasefire agreement on the resolution of the conflict (UNSC/12761,2017). The dilemma however, is that the conflicting parties have persistently violated the agreement that was developed through peace negotiations. In this regard, Mahumre (2017,p.16) asserts that "you can only execute POC mandates if there is a peace agreement that is holding and if the cessation of hostilities has been agreed to by all the parties!" He went on to say that "the practice in South Sudan is that the ceasefire agreement on cessation of hostilities has never been respected". This disregard to the ceasefire agreement indicates that the intentions of warring parties is to defeat the "other side" rather than consolidate peace.

Capacity and resource constraints

One of the challenges that has continuously stalled the mission in carrying out its mandate has been its inadequate resources and limited military capabilities. Resource constraints - both financial and human, as well as incapacities in terms of untrained troops has been a problem for many peacekeeping operations. According to Johnson, (2015, p. 7);

The number of troops in UNMISS were wholly inadequate for the task, and much less than comparable missions. The mission had one soldier per 100 km, almost three times less peacekeepers compared to the territory of the next comparable UN mission. In addition, as no realistic amount of troops would be enough for a large country like South Sudan, force multipliers and particularly attack helicopters, would have been essential.

Another challenge relates to the limited number of UN Police officers. Despite demands on the representation of all individual police officers (IPO) and formed police unit (FPU) in all parts of South Sudan, the UN Police operated with limited capacity of personnel especially FPUs, to cover the vast territory of the mission area.South Sudan has 10 states, and UNMISS has a Field Office in each, while the UN Police have some presence in all the Field Offices through its IPOs, it has only had FPU presence in three Field Offices. (Dessu, 2023).

Conclusion

The study aims to examine the extent to which the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) has been able to resolve conflicts in the country. It also explores the challenges to implementing the protection of civilians mandate in South Sudan.We anchored our analysis on the theory of conflict transformation articulated by Lederach (2023), Galtung (2000), Young (2010) and Botes (2023), and found thatUNMISS has addressed the security challenges at the POC sites in a variety of ways;it has reached out to community leaders and sought to establish some ground rules for appropriate conduct. It has also supported informal community-led conflict resolution mechanisms, and implemented conflict transformation trainings and peace dialogue at some of the sites.UNMISS police patrol the sites on a daily basis and deal with incidents as they arise. This includes investigation and cooperation with local authorities in order to bring the perpetrators to justice. With regard to sexual and gender-based violence, the mission cooperates with humanitarian partners in order to streamline referral pathways and provide emergency services to the victims.

Notwithstanding the positive results of the mission's conflict resolution efforts, there are some challenges which have impeded its ability to effectively protect civilians, they include, but not limited to the following,access restriction, the nature of cessation hostilities as well as capacity and resource constraints.

Recommendations

(i) There is need for closer coordination between IGAD, the AU, and the UN Security Council, and the Troika, as well as other relevant actors, on the situation in South Sudan and on strategies to restore order and stability in the country

(ii) Enhancing the performance of the UN Mission in South Sudan requires strengthening proactive protection of civilians, improving rapid response capabilities, boosting supply chain management among others.

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