

UNMISS Mandate Extension: Shifting Roles in South Sudan

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Abstract. The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), established by the UN Security Council in 2013, had its mandate extended through UN Security Council Resolution 2677 from March 2023 to March 2024. This mandate extension also marks a change in UNMISS's role, which was previously focused on peacekeeping and protecting civilians, but now also actively provides humanitarian assistance and works to prevent violence against civilians as the civil war in South Sudan comes to an end. This study uses Mary J. Kaldor's Cosmopolitan Approach to analyze humanitarian interventions regarding UNMISS's role, the success of humanitarian aid distribution, and the reduction of domestic conflicts during the mandate extension. The analysis framework divides the role of UN humanitarian intervention into three stages: protecting civilians, providing humanitarian aid and assistance, and preventing future human rights violations. This study reveals that at least the extension of the UNMISS mandate is still needed at least until the elections are held at the end of the year.

Keywords: cosmopolitan approach, Resolution 2677, South Sudan, UNMISS

Abstrak. United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) dibentuk oleh Dewan Keamanan PBB sejak tahun 2013 mendapat perpanjangan mandat melalui Resolusi 2677 Dewan Keamanan PBB dari Maret 2023 hingga Maret 2024. Perpanjangan mandat ini juga menandai adanya perubahan fungsi dari UNMISS, yang sebelumnya sebagai pasukan perdamaian dan perlindungan terhadap masyarakat sipil, saat ini turut aktif dalam memberikan bantuan kemanusiaan serta mencegah terjadinya kekerasan terhadap masyarakat sipil seiring berakhirnya perang sipil di Sudan Selatan. Penelitian ini menggunakan analisis Cosmopolitan Approach milik Mary J. Kaldor dalam melihat intervensi kemanusiaan terhadap peran UNMISS, keberhasilan distribusi bantuan kemanusiaan dan pengurangan jumlah konflik dalam negeri selama perpanjangan mandat. Kerangka analisis tersebut membagi peran intervensi kemanusiaan PBB menjadi tiga tahap: perlindungan terhadap masyarakat sipil, pemberian bantuan dan pertolongan kemanusiaan, serta pencegahan terhadap pelanggaran hak asasi manusia di masa mendatang. Penelitian ini mengungkap bahwa setidaknya perpanjangan mandat UNMISS masih diperlukan setidaknya hingga pemilihan umum dilaksanakan di penghujung tahun.

Kata Kunci: cosmopolitan approach, Resolusi 2677, Sudan Selatan, UNMISS

1. INTRODUCTION

It's almost a decade since the first outbreak of civil war following the independence of South Sudan from Sudan, the signed armistice between the Government of South Sudan and SPLM (Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in-Opposition) resulted in the warring parties to agree to the creation of Unity Government of South Sudan which acknowledge the territorial revert of South Sudan to 10 states and 3 special administrative states (Mednick, 2020).

Years of civil war plunged South Sudan into a state of humanitarian crisis, which affected civilians' livelihoods not only because of the conflicts but also due to the food shortages, locust invasions, and widespread floods throughout the country (Mednick, 2020). As the UNMISS (United Nations Mission in South Sudan) formed under United Nations' Security Council back in 2011, the focus of the peacekeeping force has been projected to assist the humanitarian needs and safe passage of civilians trapped in the crosshair of conflicts (Munive, 2021), the year 2013 saw the first humanitarian-engagement between UNMISS operatives and South Sudan civilians when the 100.000 displaced peoples begged UNMISS to open their bases and allow them to seek protection from the on-going conflict, thus, marking the decisions of United Nations to built PoC (Protection of Civilian) Camps throughout South Sudan which to this day still notable as the largest number of PoC camps the peacekeeping forces ever built during their missions in countries affected by conflicts (Munive, 2021).

UNMISS, for the duration of the conflict, housed hundreds of thousands of displaced persons in PoC camps scattered in Bentiu (the majority), Juba, Bor, Malakal, and Wau. As of June 2020, 181.231 displaced persons were still under the protection of UNMISS throughout those camps (UNMISS, 2020). With those staggering numbers, responsibilities fall on UNMISS to carry out not only peacekeeping actions but also to address the number of civilians in need of protection, a task that would be simply burdened on UNMISS if the involvement of other humanitarian actors were absent.

Seven years since the first PoC camp were built back in 2013 when UNMISS decided to gradually dismantle the camps since June of 2020 following the concluded peace agreements between government and rebel groups, most of the civilians camped in PoC camps decided to return home to their families while others become full-time resident of redesigned PoC camps known as IDP Camps being administered fully by South Sudanese government with humanitarian assistances being provided by international donors and UN agencies (Salifu, 2023). With the camps being administered by other actors, UNMISS can now redeploy its troops and operatives throughout South Sudan, where reported violence and atrocities still occurred between opposition and government forces, noting that despite a decreasing number of civilian casualties in conflicts for the past few years, a small-scale conflict occurred, marking that UNMISS missions in South Sudan are far from over (Sullivan, 2016).

By the early of 2022, UNMISS saw their mandate in South Sudan nearing its dawn when UN Security Council decided to extend UNMISS' involvements in South Sudan following the renewal mandate through UN Security Council Resolution 2677 that effectively come into force by March 2023 and will end by March of 2024 (United Nations Press, 2023), the renewed mandate put UNMISS' focuses now on protecting the live of civilians, providing safe environment for humanitarian assistances, assess and support the implementation of Revitalized Peace Agreement, and monitor, investigate, and report any violations of international humanitarian law (United Nations, 2023a). This March marked the last month of UNMISS mandate in South Sudan, this paper will then focus on what UNMISS has achieved for the past year, from its mandate renewal in March 2023 through March 2024.

Literature Review

Peacekeeping Forces as Humanitarian Intervention Actors

Numerous author from the past decade argued that the effectiveness or the role of peacekeeping forces itself should be measured as a means on how every peacekeeping missions carried out to its extent, (Di Salvatore & Ruggeri, 2017) argued that peacekeeping mission considered successful if the peacekeeping forces

capable to curb the conflict from several dimensions, when the warring parties able to comply to the condition of ceasefires (Fortna, 2008), protecting civilians life from the occurring violences (Bove & Ruggeri, 2014), (Hultman et al., 2013), formed stable and peaceful polities (Doyle & Sambanis, 2000), and shrinking numbers of conflict between conflicting belligerents (Hultman et al., 2014).

With the growing number of peacekeeping missions around the world in the late period of the Cold War, the applicability of humanitarian intervention to peacekeeping forces has always been considered a binding role for every peacekeeping force since their formation, legally enacted by the United Nations. Since the inception of Unified Command in Korea as requested by ICRC during the three-year-long Korean War, the roles and functions of every peacekeeping force should be in accordance with the applicability of International Humanitarian Law, since every peacekeeping force is considered an agent in engaging the United Nations' role in every conflicting country where peacekeeping forces exist (Shraga, 1998).

Several authors noted the differences of United Nations' roles in every intervention throughout the world by the late period of Cold War, it is only when the situations worsened in majority of Balkans country when United Nations decided to intervene with the situations as early as 1992 during the Bosnian war (Kaldor, 2003a), through the course of the war from 1992 to their cessation of hostilities in 1995 under Dayton Peace Agreement when international media and civil society organizations both within the Bosnia-Herzegovina and European countries put pressures through warring parties and United Nations to pursue alternative approach as a means to protect civilians trapped in the crosshair, a significant innovation purposed to preserve the human rights during conflicts as Kaldor (2003b) mentioned it as a *Cosmopolitan Approach*.

Other than humanitarian intervention led by United Nations in Balkans, similar approach were used by the United Nations during Operation Provide Comfort near the end of Iraq-Kuwait war which saw the mass expulsion by Iraqi armies towards the minority populace of Kurds in northern Iraq whom fled to Turkey and Iran (Liebl, 2023), the other were Operation

Restore Hope in Somalia when United Nations' Security Council decided to deploy UNITAF as humanitarian operation in the southern half of the country following the urgent aids pleaded by Somalia's Somali National Alliance under General Mohamed Farah Aidid (Roberts, 1993).

The innovative humanitarian approach during Security's Council intervention using Peacekeeping Forces as mentioned by Kaldor (2003b) was then considered a just humanitarian intervention since the United Nations' Security Council possessed legal and practical means to carry out humanitarian intervention and the capacity to either reject or approve any intervention proposals by member countries (Pattison, 2008).

Recent discussion on Cosmopolitan Approach were conducted by several authors such as (Archibugi, 2004; Pattison, 2008; Brown & Bohm, 2016) on the extent difficult of employing cosmopolitan approaches within peacekeeping forces following the end of Iraqi War, series of conflicts in Darfur, etc., which noted the full creation of cosmopolitan forces sometimes refused by the permanent members of Security Council, indicating that not every conflicts that occurred in all parts of the world does not receive any immediate humanitarian response from the Security Council.

The decline in conflict in South Sudan followed the peace process, political deals between the warring parties, and the presence of peacekeeping forces and international humanitarian organizations, which marked a diminishing number of violent incidents throughout the country. The extension of UNMISS' mandate in South Sudan underscores the urgent need for humanitarian intervention, with the four key priorities outlined in Resolution 2677.

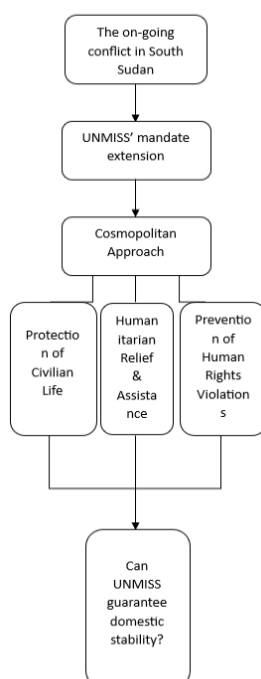
This study departs from much of the existing literature on the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), which has predominantly underlined its peacekeeping functions during the active phase of the South Sudanese civil war. Previous studies (Hunt, 2020; Jochemsen, 2022; Nurcahyani et al., 2024) have largely focused on the mission's role in conflict mitigation, civilian protection during hostilities, and the operational challenges of peacekeeping amid ongoing violence. However, relatively limited attention has been given to

how UNMISS's mandate has evolved after the war, particularly following the extension under United Nations Security Council Resolution 2677. This shift shows a broader reorientation toward humanitarian assistance, human rights protection, and support for political transition in a post-conflict setting. By analyzing these changing roles, this study seeks to address this gap and to present a more comprehensive understanding of UNMISS's contemporary functions.

2. METHOD

This research concentrates on the applicability of the cosmopolitan approach in analyzing the roles of UNMISS during their mandate extension in 2023, following the passing of UN Security Council Resolution 2677 in the same year. The cosmopolitan approach employed in this research focuses primarily on the humanitarian aspects of the United Nations' intervention in South Sudan, and is operationalized into three analytical categories derived from Kaldor's (2003b) cosmopolitan approach: (1) protection of civil life, (2) humanitarian relief & assistance, and (3) prevention of human rights violations, ensuring the safety of country's future. To understand the mentioned operationalization systematically, we present the conceptual framework for this research in the diagram below:

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework



This research utilizes a descriptive-qualitative methodology, employing qualitative document analysis to examine how ongoing conflicts in South Sudan compelled the UN Security Council to extend UNMISS's mandate. Data are drawn primarily from official UN documents, including Resolution S/RES/2677 (2023), the Security Council's and the UN's subordinate periodic reports on South Sudan, and UNMISS mandate documents. Secondary sources include peer-reviewed scholarship on cosmopolitan peacekeeping and reports from organizations such as the International Peace Institute, and FAO's Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC).

Documents were selected based on their direct relevance to the 2023 mandate renewal, official or scholarly authority, and publication within the 2022 – 2024 period. Analytical procedures follow a three-stage content analysis: organizing documents by their operationalization relevance, coding passages against the three analytical categories, and synthesizing findings to assess the cosmopolitan character of UNMISS's renewed mandate, which ran until March 2024.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Extension of UNMISS' mandate through Resolution 2677 in 2023, Part of Humanitarian Intervention?

As of now, the Government of South Sudan is preparing for the next elections scheduled for December 2024, amid ongoing violence between communities across the country, notably in the Abyei region and the states of Lakes, Unity, Jonglei, and Warrap. Severe humanitarian challenges, exacerbated by ongoing conflict, threaten the safety of civilians, while the limited presence of government institutions to provide essential services or ensure security underscores the seriousness of South Sudan's difficulties. The crisis has worsened with an influx of refugees and returnees fleeing violence in Sudan. On February 6, 2024, a Security Council Report, along with two think tanks, the International Peace Institute and the Stimson Center, assessed the extension of the UNMISS mandate. This meeting included representatives from member states, UN officials, civil society organizations, and experts, all of whom contributed their views on

South Sudan's situation (International Peace Institute, 2024).

The majority, with 13 votes in favor and 2 abstentions (China and Russia), opted to prolong UNMISS's mandate until March 15, 2024, while maintaining a maximum of 17,000 troops and 2,101 police personnel. The agreement was later incorporated into the text of Resolution 2677 (2023), document S/RES/2677 (2023), under Chapter 7 of the UN Charter. The Council outlined four key areas for the UNMISS to focus on in its mandate. These areas include protecting civilians, facilitating conditions for the delivery of humanitarian aid, supporting the implementation of the Revised Agreement and the broader peace process, and monitoring, investigating, and reporting on human rights violations (UN, 2023).

While it was decided to prolong the mandate, the fifteen members asked council members to address critical concerns in the mandate renewal at UNMISS in addition to the four basic pillars, specifically the urgent implementation of the 2018 peace deal known as R-ARCSS. Key goals include crafting a permanent constitution, defining elections that will possibly be held in December, formulating an election security strategy in collaboration with UNMISS, forming and deploying a Necessary Unified Force, and providing local security during elections (International Peace Institute, 2024).

Progress on South Sudan's political transition, as outlined in the 2018 Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) and the Roadmap Towards the End of Peaceful and Democratic Political Transition by 2022, has been slow. The obligations stipulated in these frameworks have been placed upon the transitional government, which has been criticized for its sluggishness in making crucial electoral decisions. To adhere to the December 2024 election timeline, it is imperative that the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in-Opposition (SPLM/A-IO) reach consensus on the way forward. This, however, is widely seen as highly challenging, given the conflicting interests between the transitional government and opposition factions. Consequently, UNMISS has been assigned the task of facilitating an inclusive

dialogue between the involved parties (United Nations, 2023b)

Aside from worries regarding election stability, numerous parties are concerned about the current domestic situation. The economic scenario includes a 60 percent decline in the South Sudanese pound against the US dollar since early 2023. The decline in South Sudan's currency is caused by rising money in circulation, dwindling central bank reserves, and imbalances in the demand and supply of foreign exchange. The ongoing turmoil in Sudan has led to currency depreciation and limited commodity supply, driving up market prices. On the one hand, South Sudanese public servants and military personnel are lobbying for a 400 percent pay rise (United Nations, 2023b).

Security concerns and the protection of civilians are largely concentrated on the influx of returning refugees from Sudan, attacks by the National Salvation Front (NAS), arrests of civilians by the South Sudan People's Defense Forces (SSPDF) under suspicion of NAS collaboration, and persistent cross-border conflicts between the Dinka Ngok and Dinka Twic communities along the borders of the Abyei Administrative Region and Warrap State. On November 30, 2023, Upper Nile State witnessed the arrival of over 300,000 displaced persons through various border crossing points from Sudan, leading to overcrowding and a rise in criminal activities (OCHA, 2019). The situation in Jonglei State remains precarious, further exacerbated by the assassination of a former SSPDF leader in Pochala in September 2023, heightening regional tensions. In response, clashes erupted between Anyuak youth and SSPDF forces, resulting in at least 30 deaths and the displacement of 12,000 individuals to safer locations, including Ethiopia (United Nations, 2023b).

In Central Equatoria State, tensions also remained high as SSPDF operations against NAS forces intensified following the September 8, 2023, assassination of the Ombasi Chief Executive and two civilians in Yei River County. These events were compounded by the August 2023 arrests of individuals suspected of collaborating with NAS, which escalated tensions within the Kakwa community and triggered large-scale displacements. According to the Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and

Evaluation Commission (RJMEC) report of 2023, the situation in Central Equatoria State remains volatile, characterized by ongoing conflicts between the state Governor and his Deputy, as well as clashes between indigenous groups and Dinka cattle herders from Bor in the Mundri West region (RJMEC, 2023). Additionally, clashes between the Dinka Twic and Dinka Ngok communities were reported, primarily driven by the abduction of five Dinka Twic traders in three separate incidents by Dinka Ngok individuals (United Nations, 2023b).

A dire humanitarian situation was estimated by RJMEC and the United Nations, as heavy rains led to widespread flooding in the Nyal, Mayom, and Kol areas of Unity State, affecting nearly 20,000 people. In September 2023, authorities in the Imehejek Administrative Region of Eastern Equatoria State reported that more than 3,000 people had fled their homes due to severe food shortages. The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) report identified a critical lack of access to water, food, and livelihoods, resulting in increased rates of moderate to severe malnutrition and further displacement (IPC South Sudan, 2023). In addition to the influx of over 400,000 individuals from Sudan, more than 90,000 people returned from Ethiopia, leading to overcrowding in shelters across Akobo, Jonglei State. Throughout the final quarter of 2023, 66 incidents of humanitarian access restrictions were documented, including 20 cases involving violence against humanitarian personnel. Furthermore, 12 cases of looting and theft of humanitarian supplies were reported. In September 2023, 25 humanitarian workers were relocated due to violence in Pochala, Greater Pibor Administrative Region, and Rubkona, Unity State, with four humanitarian workers killed in the line of duty by the end of the year (United Nations, 2023b).

Under these circumstances, the protection of civilians remains the primary focus of UNMISS operations across four mission areas. UNMISS's efforts in safeguarding civilians have played a crucial role in enhancing safety and security. UN Security Council Resolution 2677 extends the UNMISS mandate through 2023 as part of the broader humanitarian response. The resolution underscores the importance of creating conditions favorable for the delivery of

humanitarian assistance, a key aspect of the intervention. Additionally, it mandates that UNMISS ensure the security and freedom of movement of UN personnel, infrastructure, and equipment, which are vital to the effective distribution of aid. The resolution also calls for heightened measures to prevent and address sexual and gender-based violence.

Recent Humanitarian Intervention in South Sudan following the mandate extension

a. Protection of Civilian Life

The protection of civilians (PoC), as established in various UN Security Council resolutions under Chapter 7 of the UN Charter, is a cornerstone of UN peacekeeping missions. This mandate grants legal authority to use force to protect civilians. The legal basis for the use of force in peacekeeping operations stems from two sources: (a) explicit authorization under Chapter 7 for specific tasks, such as civilian protection, or (b) inferred through the right of self-defense (Gray, 2008). The mandate operates within the broader legal context of the Charter, drawing on both sources of authority. UN peacekeeping missions, therefore, hold a broader legal mandate to use force and to influence the sovereignty of host states than other governmental actors. This reflects the UN's unique status as an international body with global legitimacy, and peacekeeping missions symbolize collective international action through the UN.

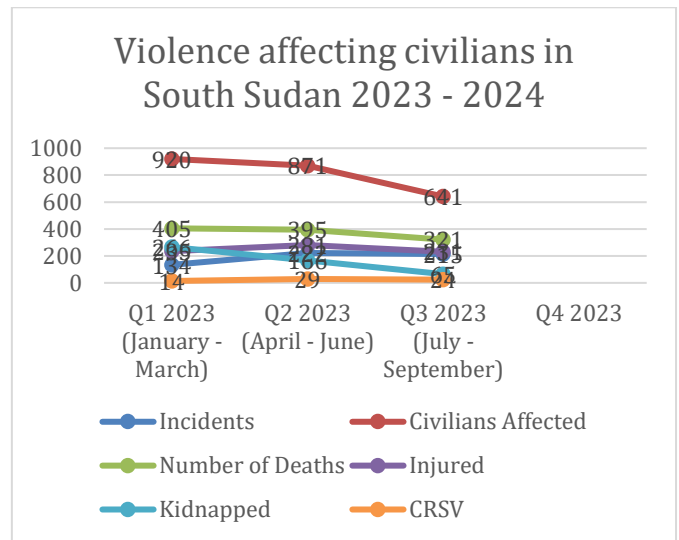
The UNMISS mandate was produced to align with the three-year strategic vision laid out in Resolution 2567 (2021), aimed at preventing a resurgence of civil war in South Sudan, fostering sustainable peace at both local and national levels, and supporting inclusive and accountable governance, as well as free, fair, and peaceful elections in accordance with the Revitalized Agreement. The Security Council has empowered UNMISS to use all necessary means to ensure the effective, timely, and dynamic protection of civilians facing imminent threats of violence through a coordinated and integrated strategy, irrespective of the cause or location of such violence. This authority enables UNMISS to prevent, disrupt, and halt violence against civilians, including politically motivated violence, particularly in high-risk areas. UNMISS is also tasked with engaging any actors planning

or carrying out attacks on civilians, refugee camps, or areas designated for civilian protection by UNMISS.

Additionally, UNMISS is authorized to provide special protection to women and children, particularly internally displaced persons (IDPs) affected by relocation, resettlement, or reintegration into host communities. UNMISS also collaborates with national and state authorities, as well as civil society organizations, to design and implement gender-responsive community violence reduction (CVR) programs, which aim to de-escalate intercommunal violence and complement disarmament efforts through coordination with development partners and local communities. Furthermore, UNMISS is tasked with providing technical assistance and capacity-building support to the South Sudanese government, helping to reform the rule of law and justice sector in line with the provisions of the Peace Agreement. This includes strengthening civilian protection, combating impunity, and promoting accountability, particularly through the investigation and prosecution of gender-based violence (United Nations, 2023a).

To track the violence spreading across the country, UNMISS employs the Human Rights Division to document conflicts that have occurred on a three-month basis since the mandate extension in South Sudan. The chart shown below monitored the conflict that occurred in South Sudan prior to (Q1 of 2023) and following the enactment of Resolution 2677 by the United Nations Security Council, which mandated UNMISS (Q2-Q3 of 2023):

Figure 2. Violence affecting civilians in South Sudan 2023-2024



Since the mandate extension, the number of incidents has gradually decreased, followed by the number of victims affected, such as the number of civilian deaths, injuries, kidnappings, and conflict-related sexual violence.

Following the extension of its mandate, UNMISS has launched several initiatives to support the implementation of the Protection of Civilians (PoC) mandate. One of the earliest efforts was a collaboration between UNMISS, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UN Women, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and the independent South Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission, operating under South Sudan's Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management (United Nations, 2023b).

With those four organizations, in June of 2023, collaborators opened the consultations in three refugee camps in Wau, Raja, and Juba with the refugees, internally displaced persons, and returnees on the electoral-making process for the upcoming South Sudan election, noting the equal opportunity for women during the election and to assess the improvement needed on the security border.

To maximize the roles of every peacekeeping force in South Sudan, UNMISS employs the whole-of-mission approach, which leverages military, police, and civilian personnel to provide rapid responses in the event of emergency threats or situations. With coordinated operations, UNMISS mobilizes its personnel to promote dialogue with civilians and peaceful coexistence and to facilitate

reconciliation with the conflicting parties, which still occurs at the local level, protecting civilians living near or within conflict regions (United Nations, 2023b).

Initially, UNMISS facilitated 18 capacity-building initiatives across Jonglei, the Greater Pibor Administrative Area, Warrap, Lakes, Central Equatoria, Western Equatoria, Eastern Equatoria, Western Bahr-El Ghazal, Unity, and Upper Nile States. These initiatives engaged a wide range of stakeholders, including warring factions, civilians, traditional leaders, community members, and displaced populations (United Nations, 2023b).

Apart from capacity building and peace initiatives, UNMISS also conducted patrols involving both military and police, staging camps in Koch, Unity State; Tambura, Western Equatoria; and Jamjang, Ruweng State, mainly focusing on patrolling refugee and IDP camps, cities, airports, and river ports. UNMISS planned to open 11 more temporary staging bases in the states of Latjor, Jonglei, Northern Liech, Kapoeta, Juba, Imatong, Maridi, Tonj, and Lol. As of August 31, 2023, UNMISS had conducted 4.248 military patrols and 2.010 police patrols throughout South Sudan.

Military operatives of UNMISS also initiated Mine Action Service, a task to identify, dispose of, and remove suspected landmines and other explosive ordnances. This operation successfully disposed of 60.952 ordnances and landmines, enabling civilians to open 82 agricultural areas, 25 water sources, and medical facilities, an exploit that released 733.596 m² of area from dangerous ordnance and landmines. UNMISS also provided awareness to 86.320 civilians through ordnance risk education, which provided them with mitigation steps in case they encounter explosives or dangerous items (United Nations, 2023b).

As 2023 ended, at the domestic-politics level, UNMISS encouraged the Political Parties Council, the National Elections Commission, the National Constitutional Review Commission, the warring parties, and political leaders to enhance their dialogue in preparation for the National Election, which will be held in December 2024. In February, the negotiating parties concluded

the planned budget for the upcoming election (UN Security Council, 2024).

UNMISS continued to provide assistance for 1.313 displaced persons who voluntarily asked to return home. The military patrols increased to 40% since August 2023, with documented patrols reaching 10,346, while police operatives conducted another 1,911 patrols. The Mine Action Service freed up another 1.470.621 m² of area, again opening 34 agricultural areas, 9 water sources, and 5 medical facilities, and also educating 78.591 civilians throughout South Sudan on risks and awareness of explosive ordnance and landmines. By the end of February 2024, UNMISS focused on facilitating peace dialogues in Pochala, cattle raid incidents involving the tribe in Bor and Murle, Toposa and Murle conflict, and also conflict between the tribe of Dinka Twic and Dinka Ngoc in the state of Jonglei (UN Security Council, 2024).

b. Humanitarian Relief & Assistances

The provision of humanitarian assistance to affected communities has long been regarded as central to protection efforts within the humanitarian field. In integrated UN peacekeeping operations, missions are often mandated to either facilitate or create the security conditions necessary for the delivery of humanitarian aid by UN agencies in the field. In extreme cases, missions may be called upon to assist in delivering aid by military means. UN police forces also play a role in these efforts by ensuring secure routes in refugee camps and managing public order during the distribution of relief supplies.

Humanitarian agencies, including those led by both local and international civilian actors, conduct various activities in affected areas (IASC, 1999). As civilians, these humanitarian workers are entitled to physical protection under the PoC mandate. Although creating secure conditions that enable the civilian-led delivery of humanitarian aid is often part of the PoC mandate and indirectly enhances the protective environment, humanitarian actors maintain neutrality, impartiality, and operational independence—core humanitarian principles. These principles ensure their acceptance by all parties and, with the security provided, enhance their ability to reach those in

need and deliver assistance effectively. Therefore, preserving a clear distinction between the roles and functions of humanitarian actors and those of political and military actors, particularly in conflict and post-conflict contexts, is crucial to establishing an environment in which humanitarian organizations can operate safely and fulfill their mandates.

Through resolution 2677 (2023), UNMISS is mandated to generate favorable conditions for the delivery of humanitarian aid as stated in section (c) in points (i) and (ii):

UNMISS worked closely with humanitarian partners to generate conducive conditions for the delivery of humanitarian aid to civilians affected by the crisis. Mission assets and personnel support humanitarian agencies in delivering aid safely and, upon request, provide force protection for humanitarian convoys. The significantly increased humanitarian operations have also led to a surge in requests for protection of humanitarian convoys, UN facilities, and assets across all affected areas. This is a major challenge, as it requires difficult decisions about prioritizing protection tasks. In the 'Good Offices' application, at the request of the UN Humanitarian Coordinator, UNMISS was asked to undertake the delivery of humanitarian aid. In addition, humanitarian partners sought to find alternatives to security management to reduce reliance on armed escorts and UNMISS force protection.

South Sudan NGO Forum has documented hundreds of humanitarian organizations, including UNHCR, UNDP, World Food Program, and many others, both global and local, operating in South Sudan to this day (South Sudan NGO Forum, 2024). As of August 2023, the monitored situation concerning the return of displaced persons arriving from Sudan to South Sudan reached 226.956 persons, all of whom have successfully registered with UNHCR and are awaiting medical assistance and support. During those months, UNMISS also conducted 44 long-duration patrols, 1,564 short-duration patrols, and 591 protection tasks to support humanitarian aid delivery by various organizations. Additionally, UNMISS conducted 59 humanitarian assistance missions (United Nations, 2023b).

World Food Programme, as of December 2023 funded 679 million U.S Dollars of relief for South Sudan, from those numbers, majority of those relief come into food and livelihoods assistance, nutritional support, and logistics distributed to the affected populations in the state of Western Bahr El Ghazal, Northern Bahr El Ghazal, Jonglei, Warrap, Unity, Lakes, Upper Nile, Eastern Equatoria, Western Equatoria, and Central Equatoria (WFP, 2023a). World Food Programme estimates that 7.49 million of South Sudan's population will experience high-risk food insecurity in Phase 4 of Food Insecurity, noting the emergency food situation in South Sudan (WFP, 2023b).

Humanitarian organizations documented an additional 266.830 South Sudanese refugees returning to their homes from their exodus to Sudan as of February 2024, a 17% increase from August 2023, bringing the total to 493.786 displaced persons who have returned home (UN Security Council, 2024). To support the safe delivery of humanitarian aid, UNMISS increased its presence in the country by deploying an additional 1,147 personnel from 17.954 in February 2023 to 19.101 personnel in January 2024 (UN Peacekeeping, 2024).

Aside from humanitarian assistances provided to the peoples returning home and food distribution throughout South Sudan, several relief and assistances concerning the livelihood and health conditions of South Sudanese affected from conflicts carried out by UNDP which had been operated in South Sudan (formerly southern part of Sudan) since 2006 continue to provide relief for citizens in risk of HIV, TB, AIDS, pandemics, yellow fever, and public health emergencies (UNDP, 2023).

UNDP successfully provided HIV, TB, and AIDS testing and medication in 200 hospitals and health facilities throughout the country. The efforts were carried out concerning the facts of 160.000 of South Sudanese contracted with HIV, with 113.465 of them currently receiving treatment. As of 2023, 4.013.214 South Sudanese have been tested for HIV to reduce the spread of the disease. On the other hand, 95.502 have been treated for Tuberculosis, and 246.677 have been tested for Tuberculosis (UNDP, 2023).

Lastly, in order to ensure fully operational health facilities throughout the country, UNDP provided electrification to 28

hospitals in South Sudan, which will be completed in June 2024. The effort to support electrification stems from the fact that, as of today, South Sudan is still considered one of the least electrified countries in the world, with a shortage of electricity supply nationwide. Collaborating with the Ministry of Health, UNDP planned to install solar power in 28 hospitals; the installations will enable the hospitals to operate both day and night, support medical operations and laboratory tests, ensure patient safety, and improve storage for reagents and medical supplies (UNDP, 2023).

c. Preventing Human Right Violations

Peacekeepers, under the mandate of the United Nations Security Council, are responsible for monitoring and reporting on human rights violations in their areas of operation, while also strengthening local capacities to protect and promote human rights. In certain missions, their duties extend beyond monitoring and reporting, encompassing investigations into violations, supporting efforts to combat impunity at both national and international levels, and assisting in the establishment of transitional justice systems, including vetting processes. Special attention is frequently given to protecting women and children, with peacekeepers engaging in monitoring, advocacy, and facilitating access to justice.

Moreover, peacekeeping missions are tasked with supporting the development of national human rights institutions and providing training to law enforcement and other government personnel. This human rights monitoring often involves collaboration with UN police, who may assist in investigating local police misconduct or participate in broader investigations alongside the human rights team. To ensure a protective presence and safeguard civilians, peacekeeping operations must secure the political cooperation and consent of host governments. Maintaining this cooperation is crucial, particularly when human rights abuses involving the government are under scrutiny (United Nations, 2008).

The humanitarian crisis in South Sudan resulted in widespread civilian casualties and serious human rights violations. UNMISS, under the provisions of Security Council Resolution 2677 (2023), section (d), is specifically tasked

with conducting human rights monitoring and investigations, as outlined in its mandate:

In the final quarter of 2023, 199 incidents of violence affecting human rights and protection were reported. These included 123 deaths, 28 injuries, 20 abductions, 20 illegal arrests, 8 cases of unlawful detention, as well as various incidents of looting and destruction of civilian property. A total of 733 civilians were impacted, including 99 women and 92 children (54 boys and 38 girls). Of the 320 civilians killed, 33 were women and 18 were children (12 boys and 6 girls). Compared to the previous period, the number of incidents dropped by 15% (from 236 to 199), and the number of victims decreased by 26% (from 992 to 733). Of these incidents, 133 were linked to community militias or civil defense groups, 35 to government security forces, 10 to NAS, 11 to SPLA-IO and separatist groups, 2 to foreign armed groups, and 8 to unidentified or other armed groups (UN Security Council, 2023).

Reports of unlawful executions continued to emerge during this period. According to UN Security Council report S/2023/657, 10 civilians, including one child, were allegedly executed by state authorities in Warrap and Lakes States for their suspected involvement in inter-communal violence and other criminal acts. In the realm of sexual violence, 18 incidents were documented, affecting 21 survivors of the conflict. Additionally, there were 111 grave offenses committed against 110 children, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, 3 incidents of killing or wounding 7 children, and the rape of a young girl.

UNMISS collaborates with national and state authorities to investigate and respond to such cases. The mission also assisted in reviewing draft laws for the Truth, Reconciliation, and Elections Commission and the Compensation and Reparations Authority to ensure they align with international standards. UNMISS has been actively involved in various activities, including training stakeholders on transitional justice, and has supported the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs by developing a website to share information about transitional justice. The mission organized 49 initiatives focused on capacity building and raising awareness among government officials, the South Sudan People's Defense Forces, SPLA-

IO forces, civil society organizations, community leaders, and the general public. A total of 1,919 individuals, including 729 women, participated, thereby improving their capacity to safeguard human rights in South Sudan (UN Security Council, 2023).

4. CONCLUSION

It is important to note that extending the UNMISS mandate is crucial as South Sudan prepares for national elections in December 2024. Inter-tribal conflict is common throughout the area, especially in at-risk parts of the Abyei region and Jonglei, Warrap, Lakes, and Unity states. Furthermore, humanitarian issues are worsened by conflict and the lack of state institutions to cater to the needs of South Sudanese people. UNMISS is equipped with the appropriate guidance and adaptability to assist the nation in preparing for elections and completing pending tasks related to the political transition, including drafting the constitution, finalizing electoral details, and establishing transitional security measures. Many people observed that the continued lack of clarity on these three issues was hindering understanding of the assistance required from allies, including UNMISS (International Peace Institute, 2024).

UNMISS will maintain its troop level at 17,000 personnel and its police level at 2,101 personnel, including 88 justice and evaluation advisors, to meet these goals (United Nations, 2024). The focus of the mission will remain on four main areas: safeguarding civilians, establishing a favorable environment for humanitarian aid, supporting the enforcement of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS), and overseeing and documenting breaches of international humanitarian law and human rights. Even with these endeavors, the future of South Sudan's sustainability remains unclear. The nation faces major obstacles, including persistent intercommunal unrest, a fragile humanitarian crisis worsened by the conflict in Sudan, and the need for further political restructuring. For South Sudan to maintain its sustainability in the long run, it is crucial that the country tackle these issues and make notable progress in implementing the R-ARCSS.

We authors acknowledged that this paper is subject to several limitations. First, it relies primarily on secondary sources, including official United Nations reports and policy analyses, which may reflect institutional standpoints and limit the inclusion of local viewpoints from affected communities in South Sudan. Second, the analysis focuses developments following the extension of UNMISS's mandate under Resolution 2677, so the longer-term impacts of these changes cannot yet be fully assessed. Third, the study does not incorporate field-based data, which may constrain the depth of insight into the on-the-ground effectiveness of UNMISS's evolving roles. Future research could address these limitations by incorporating primary data, such as interviews or field observations, to provide a more in-depth evaluation of UNMISS's post-conflict engagement.

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