



Briefing Notes Summary

Group 62 – Information Centre for Asylum and Migration

South Sudan – January to June 2022

01 July 2022

24 January 2022

New peace agreement

The government (Sudan People's Liberation Movement-In Government, (SPLM-IG)) and the opposition sub-group Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army - the breakaway Kit-Gwang faction (SPLM/A-IO Kit-Gwang) signed a peace agreement on 16.01.22. In this context, a first delegation of the Agwelek Division belonging to the SPLM/SPLA-IO Kit-Gwang travelled to Juba for a meeting with President Salva Kiir on 20.01.22. In the following two days, further delegations travelled to Juba, including General Simon Gatwech Dual, who commands the SPLM/A-IO Kit-Gwang. The peace agreement that has now been concluded is based on the revived 2018 peace agreement and provides, among other things, for the future integration of the SPLM/A-IO Kit-Gwang forces into the South Sudan People's Defence Forces (SSPDF). In addition, the land of the Shilluk tribe is to be returned according to the colonial borders of 1956.

Critics consider the departure of the Kit-Gwang faction from the SPLM/A-IO and the commencement of the peace agreement to be extremely difficult, since so far, the formation of a unified army has failed primarily due to the merging of the different command structures and power structures of the participating armed forces. Now another command structure has been added with the Kit-Gwang faction, which has made it even more difficult to reach a consensus. Moreover, the split from the SPLM/A-IO is not conducive to a united approach.

21 February 2022

Security Situation

In a report released on 17.02.22, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) stated that cases of violence against civilians reported for 2021 had decreased by 42% compared with the previous year. A total of 3,414 civilian victims of killings, injuries, abductions and conflict-related sexual violence were documented for 2021. The previous year, UNMISS reported 5,850 civilian victims. For 2021, most victims were registered in the context of conflict within the country. Warrap State recorded the highest number of incidents at 24%, Western Equatoria State 19%, and Jonglei State and Greater Pibor Administrative Area 17%, respectively.

Due to the resurgence of violence in some parts of the country, UNMISS has urged the government to investigate and prosecute such violations.

The UN also condemned the killing of two humanitarian workers and the prevalence of violence in general. On 10.02.22, a nurse was killed in Warrap State, in the disputed region of Abyei, in the course of fighting in the area. The same day, a humanitarian aid worker in Unity State was caught in the crossfire of armed combat and fatally shot. On 12.02.22, a clearly identifiable vehicle belonging to an aid organisation was shot at on its way to a health centre. Three people inside the vehicle were seriously injured. According to UN figures, 130 humanitarian aid workers have been killed since 2013.

The ongoing violence, as well as repeated threats, against workers from humanitarian aid organisations is severely affecting the work of these organisations.

14 March 2022

Impending famine

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) warns of widespread food insecurity in South Sudan, which could prove fatal for a large section of the population. Due to ongoing conflicts, climate disasters, the COVID-19 pandemic and rising prices, many people have lost their livelihoods. Arable land and crops have been destroyed, and there is a lack of available means of survival throughout the country. As a result, in total, 70% of the population is directly threatened by famine during the annual drought. According to the report, at the peak of the season, food and stockpiles will not be sufficient to ensure adequate supplies. The WFP itself says it can only provide some of those most in need with the basic necessities for survival.

28 March 2022

Security situation

Last week, fighting reportedly broke out between government units under the command of President Salva Kiir and SPLM/A-IO forces led by First Vice President Riek Machar. Both sides blame each other for the outbreak of fighting. In the wake of these latest clashes, the SPLM/A-IO suspended its participation in meetings of several security mechanisms and bodies that form an important part of the 2018 peace agreement. Due to the ongoing deterioration of the situation, on 23.03.22, the so-called Troika – consisting of the U.S., the U.K. and Norway – expressed concern about the continuation of the unity government and called for full commitment from all parties involved to implement the outstanding projects in a timely manner. In less than a year, the transition period will end and with it the responsibilities of the current interim government.

04 April 2022

Agreement between President Kiir and Vice President Machar

On 31.03.22, the president and his first vice-president reportedly agreed on a supplement to the 2018 peace agreement. This allayed recent fears of a new escalation of violence between the two camps (cf. BN of 28.03.22). A decisive controversial issue was the formation of a unified army, in which the forces of both politicians were to be merged. In particular, the future command structure of the joint armed forces was a matter in dispute. According to the agreement that has now been concluded, 60 percent of leadership positions are to go to followers of the president and 40 percent to representatives of the opposition. The new command structure is to be implemented 10 within the next two months. The agreement also commits both parties once again to respecting the existing ceasefire.

25 April 2022

Formation of a joint army and election plans for February 2023

After President Salva Kiir and Vice-President Riek Machar were able to agree on 31.03.22 on a consistent approach to the formation of joint armed forces (cf. BN of 04.04.22), representatives of the SPLM-IO criticised the implementation some weeks later, saying that the president was violating the agreements by, for example, creating posts for his own people that had not been agreed upon beforehand. In addition, they complained that Kiir had eliminated three posts originally intended for representatives of the SPLM-IO.

The formation of joint armed forces is a fundamental element of the 2018 peace agreement, as well as one of the preconditions for elections of a new government at the end of the transitional period. In a recent report, however, the UN mission in South Sudan doubts the feasibility of holding elections in February 2023, stating that the main obstacles were insufficient logistical preparation and the persistent insecurity in parts of the country.

Abyei Region: Insecure situation

In a report of 21.04.22 to the UN Security Council, Sudan and South Sudan were urged to renew talks on the final status of the Abyei region. According to the report, the situation is relatively calm overall, but marked by increasing mistrust between the two ethnic groups of Misseriya and Ngok Dinka.

In addition, several violent clashes in several towns in the region have killed up to 42 people and injured 27, the report notes. The numbers differ among the various sources. Also, almost 2,000 head of cattle have been stolen. According to the report, the humanitarian situation is also deteriorating. While in October 2021, a total of 103,000 people had been in need of assistance, the current figure is 240,000. In view of the prevailing problems, the report advocated for a six-month extension of the UNISFA mission beyond 15.10.22.

02 Mai 2022

Security situation in Upper Nile State

In its report of 25.04.22, the UN peacekeeping mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) condemned the crimes committed during the outbreak of violence between 17.02.22 and 07.04.22 in the Leer region. According to the report, there was widespread use of sexual violence as well as beheadings and the burning alive of civilians. The violence was perpetrated by armed youths from the Koch and Mayendit regions, who also attacked several villages, stole the livestock of the local population, burned down houses and looted stocks. Due to the violence, almost 40,000 people fled the region, some of them across the Nile to neighbouring Jonglei State. According to further information from the UN, about 72 people were killed and 11 injured during the period. In addition, 64 cases of sexual violence were registered.

The head of UNMISS subsequently called on national and regional authorities to take immediate action to reduce the prevailing tensions and prevent further escalation of violence and retaliation. The perpetrators would have to be held accountable by the judiciary, UNMISS demanded.

16 Mai 2022

UN: Increase in sexual violence

According to a report published on 10.05.22 by the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), cases of conflict-related sexual violence have increased in the first quarter of 2022. Compared to the same period last year, the figure has more than doubled with over 60 documented cases, although violence against civilians has decreased overall.

Persistent violence

On 11.05.22, at least 20 people were reportedly killed and a livestock of 3,000 to 10,000 animals stolen in a night raid on a livestock farm near Mugali Payam village in Magwi County, with details varying in the reports. In addition, 11 people were reportedly injured and more than 50 animals killed. Several people are considered missing, and many people left the region due to the fighting. Police said they had the situation under control, but no further details were given on the perpetrators or the exact circumstances of the attack. The government has stated that investigations and appropriate measures were being taken to curb the ongoing violence in the region.

23 Mai 2022

Security situation

On 15.05. and 16.05.22, there was another assault on cattle herders in the Leer region of Unity State, leaving 28 people killed and 30 others injured. According to media reports, the attackers were youths from the Mayendit and Koch regions, both also located in Unity State.

In the disputed region of Abyei located between Sudan and South Sudan, fighting between members of ethnic Twic and Ngok Dinka has been going on for some time. Most recently, several people were killed, injured, and displaced in fighting on 16.05.22; there is no information on exact numbers. The conflicts mainly affect the Aneet and Rumamer regions. Due to the poor security situation, the radio station Abyei Information and Radio Service (AIRS) announced on 18.05.22 that it would cease broadcasting for the time being. AIRS has its broadcasting studios in the town of Agok (Rumamer region). Meanwhile, the transitional government of South Sudan has announced to

send their own troops to Abyei to provide security, accusing the UN mission in Abyei of having failed to protect civilians and to contain the violence. The decision to send their own troops to the disputed region is viewed critically in some media reports, as this move might lead to a deterioration of relations with Sudan.

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