

# THE UN AND THE AFRICAN CONTINENT: A REFLECTION ON SOUTH SUDAN'S HUMANITARIAN CHALLENGES

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## ABSTRACT

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The UN is an intergovernmental organization created to promote international cooperation, as well as provide humanitarian assistance to countries suffering the economic, social and political consequences of internal strife or civil war. In 2011, South Sudan became the world's youngest independent country. However, due to the region's history, it faces serious hindrances to its military, economic, psychosocial and political development. These issues have their origin in the pre-independence period, and persist to the present day. The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) has been supporting humanitarian relief efforts in this complex country, which possesses incalculable natural and mineral resources matched only by the large numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons. Thus, the difficulty of the UN mission in South Sudan should be appreciated, considering the frictions it faces and the country's historical particularities. This study is justified as an up-to-date case study on the role of the UN in a country that is dangerously close to a humanitarian disaster, even though it is the proprietor of one of the largest energy reserves in Africa.

**Keywords:** UN. Humanitarian Assistance. South Sudan.

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## INTRODUCTION

The UN was founded in 1945, in the aftermath of World War II. It is currently comprised of 193 member states. The UN's mission and work are oriented by the purposes and principles spelled out in its charter, such as solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural and humanitarian character by means of international cooperation, providing assistance to all nations that so request (UN, 1945).

According to Cruz (2010), in the 1990s, with the dissolution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the end of the Cold War and the establishment of an almost unbridled hegemony by the United States of America, a multipolar, undefined and unstable environment took hold, characterized by the reconstitution of various forces and by the emergence of diverse ethnic, religious, political and tribal conflicts. This process amounted to the conformation of a new world order.

African countries are also part of this new world system. However, many have not been able to consolidate themselves, with their status as sovereign nations often having little in the way of empirical reality, coexisting at a political, military, territorial and economic level with a wide variety of insurgency movements and other subsectoral actors. Moreover, considering that the United States and China are major trading partners of African countries, Africa is now emerging as a catalyst for the interests of the great world powers (BUZAN; WAEVER, 2003).

Africa also has an important contribution in helping balance China's relations with the United States and other Western powers. Healthy Sino-African relations also provide China with a platform for building and improving its relations within the spectrum of the "South-South cooperation" (WENPING, 2007, p. 27). This ensures a steady expansion of its area of influence in the African continent.

China's presence in Africa is a foregone conclusion, and increasingly vital for Chinese development. Moreover, China's basis for operating in Africa has remained unbroken, unlike the United States'. It has not been comprised by the securitization of the terrorist threat. On the contrary, the Chinese were able to take advantage of the gap opened by the relative US withdrawal from Africa in the post-Cold War period (SARAIVA, 2015). Beyond the interests of the world's two major powers, Brazil has also expanded its diplomacy on the African continent.

Abdenur (2015) argues that the Brazilian network of embassies and diplomatic representations in Africa has grown rapidly during the

last decade. Brazil has a total of thirty-seven representations, more than the United Kingdom. In addition to seeking new economic opportunities, the Brazilian government wants to deepen its international economic-development cooperation, as a way of forging a more autonomous foreign policy, especially in regards to the United States and Western Europe.

Despite the apparent decline of the United States on the African continent, Freitas (2013) states that China and the United States are Africa's main economic partners when it comes to southern African oil exports. Thus, the two powers would theoretically be able to cooperatively intervene in the South Sudan conflict, promoting agreements able to benefit the interests of both parties by proposing mechanisms of peaceful conflict resolution.

As such, South Sudan cannot hide from the attentions of the two largest world powers. It owns abundant deposits of iron ore, copper, chromium, zinc, tungsten, malachite, uranium, bauxite, gold, silver, and diamonds; this, together with its oil reserves, confers the country with significant geopolitical and strategic importance. In fact, South Sudan is one of the rare places in the world where there are large untapped mineral reserves<sup>3</sup>. Furthermore, Dash (2012) states that South Sudan is the third largest oil producer in sub-Saharan Africa.

The UN's presence in Sudan and South Sudan relies on the following missions: the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), and the United Nations-African Union Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). According to Cruz (2016), UNMISS is currently one of the four most significant missions in Africa<sup>4</sup>.

However, the fulfillment of its mandate faces a number of difficulties, given the country's political, economic, psychosocial, and military issues.

This article's purview is restricted to the UN's work in South Sudan, i.e., the UNMISS mandate. Abyei is a district of Sudan, the jurisdiction of which is currently being contested by South Sudan, and Darfur is in Sudan. Despite its status as a regional organization for the production of peace, security and stability in the African continent – which often works

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<sup>3</sup> Available from: <http://g1.globo.com/mundo/noticia/2011/01/china-e-eua-disputamposicoes-no-sudao-do-sul.html>. Access on: Nov. 18, 2017.

<sup>4</sup> Cruz, Carlos Alberto Santos Entrevista exploratória sobre a participação brasileira nas Operações de Paz na África. Resende, RJ. June 16, 2016.

alongside the UN in peacekeeping processes – the study of the African Union is also outside the scope of this article.

In this sense, this article is justified by the importance of South Sudan in the global scenario and in the African continent, considering the interests of the great powers and of their resource suppliers, the Brazilian presence in that region, and the participation of the UN in the resolution of an internal conflict that severely impedes the development of the young African state. Moreover, it is worth noting that, in the post-Cold War era, intra-state conflicts became the most common forms of instability, leading to a growth in the various modalities of international peace operations. In this sense, the theme has enormous relevance for Brazil, which has an important presence in the region and has increased its participation in UN missions on the African continent<sup>5</sup>.

According to Visentini et al (2016), after the transformation of UNMISS and South Sudanese independence, Brazil joined the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) with 4 military personnel, and UNMISS with 8 (seven from the Army and one from the Air Force) (AGUILAR, 2015).

Some important strategical questions must be asked. Firstly, what is the UN's behavior towards its newest independent state, South Sudan? And what are the challenges facing this new state at the regional level, given the interests of foreign powers and the significant weight of the oil trade? To answer the above questions, this article analyzes the complex role of the United Nations in the South Sudan humanitarian intervention, considering the frictions faced by UNMISS and the country's historical particularities, given its very recent, 2011 independence.

A case study of the peace mission in South Sudan was chosen as this research's methodology. In addition, a bibliographic and documentary research in articles, theses and dissertations was carried out. These references are meant to support the elaboration of a work plan containing a proposal for a feasible approach to the theme, valuing the concepts, main ideas and objectives relevant for its study. The study's object is UNMISS's work in South Sudan, based on the procedure presented by Raymond Quivy & Luc Van Campenhoudt in the book "Manuel de recherche en sciences sociales" (QUIVY; CAMPENHOUDT, 2013).

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<sup>5</sup>Marcelo Valença, Professor of International Relations at UERJ, during a PPGCM class at the Escola de Comando e Estado-Maior do Exército.

The paper is divided into sections, allowing for the study's logical sequence to proceed in the attempt to clarify the issue at hand while remaining close to the overall research goal. The first section characterizes South Sudan from the standpoint of the most relevant political, psychosocial, military, and economic aspects. The second highlights the role of the United Nations and its work with UNMISS as the main humanitarian assistance component in the country. Finally, the third approaches the frictions faced by UNMISS while attempting to fulfill its mandate of maintaining peace and security in South Sudan.

## ON SOUTH SUDAN IN THE CONTEXT OF THE AFRICAN CONTINENT

South Sudan is the youngest country in the world. Its independence from Sudan was achieved by referendum in July 1, 2011. The country, whose capital is Juba, spans 65,000 square kilometers and borders the Central African Republic<sup>6</sup>, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and Sudan. South Sudan's border with Sudan is the most extensive of all, with approximately two thousand kilometers. Sudan has a tropical climate, with temperature variation throughout the year. Its natural and mineral riches – petroleum and gold, for instance – are immeasurable.

Prior to independence, South Sudan went through two civil wars, caused by socioeconomic and educational disparities between the developed North-central region and the marginalized and unprivileged South. Compounding these problems, there are also ethnic and religious divergences between Muslims in the North and black Christians in the South (BADAL, 1990).

The second civil war, which involved the Sudanese government and the guerrilla movement known as the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) – whose armed wing was the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) – lasted from 1983 to 2005. Since 1986, the belligerent parties have been attempting negotiations in different forums. In 2005, a peace agreement was finally signed. This provided a transitional period of six-

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<sup>6</sup> UN Secretary-General António Guterres officially invited Brazil to participate in the peacekeeping mission in the Central African Republic (CAR), with 750 military personnel, in November 2017. Available from: <https://nacoesunidas.org/onu-convida-brasil-a-participar-de-missaode-paz-republica-centro-africana>. Access on: May 17, 2018.

and-a-half years (2005 to 2011), during which South Sudan existed as a semi-autonomous entity. Relations between the SPLM and the National Congress Party in Khartoum, the capital of Sudan, became exhausting. Few expected the peace agreement to last. One reason for this assessment was the rebel movement's lack of internal cohesion. However, with the exception of some minor rebellions and desertions, the SPLM managed to remain cohesive during the interim period (ROLANDSEN et al, 2015).

Thus, although South Sudan is a recent country, its political structure is decades-old, leveraged since the creation of the SPLM. Riak (2013) states that South Sudan is effectively dominated by the SPLM/SPLA. Other political parties are weak, and are often subjected to repression in order to suppress their criticism on governance issues. Civil society is still fragile, and its members are often coerced and tortured to refrain from talking about government corruption. In this regard, assessing people's perceptions on the street is the only way to gain a sense of the prevalence of corruption.

Ethiopia and Uganda, South Sudan's neighbors, have played a major role in the country's separation and independence, with direct participation in peacemaking – especially Ethiopia, in the Abyei peacekeeping mission, and Uganda, in support of UNMISS operations in the southern region.

Buzan and Waever (2003) suggest that interactions between neighbors can create what may appear as regional patterns; however, these alleged patterns usually have no obvious boundaries, often expressing themselves as discrete chains of events rather than coordinated patterns of alliances and rivalries. Examples are the relationships between the pairs of countries Somalia and Ethiopia, Ethiopia and Sudan, Sudan and Uganda, Uganda and Rwanda, Rwanda and Zaire/Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Zaire/Democratic Republic of the Congo and Angola: all have established interactions in respect to each other's civil wars, creating a potential chain of events which extended from the Arabian Sea to the South Atlantic.

According to the Sudan Household Health Survey (2007, apud Oliveira and Silva, 2011), South Sudan has some of the worst psychosocial indicators in the world. There is no basic sanitation infrastructure; only 13% of the population has access to treated water, and only 3.3% to safe piped water and sewage. Moreover, about 90% of the population lives on less than one dollar a day, i.e., below the poverty line. The entire country has no more than three hospitals and only one doctor for every 500,000 inhabitants, a bleak picture to say the least.

South Sudan has the world's worst maternal mortality rate at birth, with over 2,000 deaths per 100,000 births. The infant mortality rate in the first year of life is 102 for every 1,000 children, placing the country among the world's twenty worst in this respect. It is the lowest-ranking nation when considering mortality up to 5 years of life, once again according to the Sudan Household Health Survey.

Buzan and Waever (2003) argue that famine and the long civil war started in 1983 have killed more than 2 million Sudanese, displacing about 5 million to neighboring countries such as Kenya and Uganda. The consequences for South Sudan were, among others, a region-wide degradation of ordinary ethnicities and belief systems. Some of the most influential tribes have suffered a complete loss of identity, and ethnic conflicts have led to the reappearance of violence in some areas, generating serious safety problems.

Such ethnic conflicts are yet another concern for the new nation. Sudan was culturally dominated by a Sunni Arab majority approximately 34-million strong. In South Sudan, however, there is an ethnic mix of approximately 200 culturally interdependent groups, most with their own languages and traditions. In this context, the Dinka ethnicity has maintained its supremacy over the southern territory, especially in the Jonglei region, northwest of Juba, an excellent land for livestock, with large water reserves. In the months after the independence, conflicts intensified between the Arab nomadic tribes and black Dinka farmers over the right of access to these natural riches, resulting in the displacement of thousands (SÁNCHEZ, 2011, apud FREITAS, 2013, p. 179, our translation).

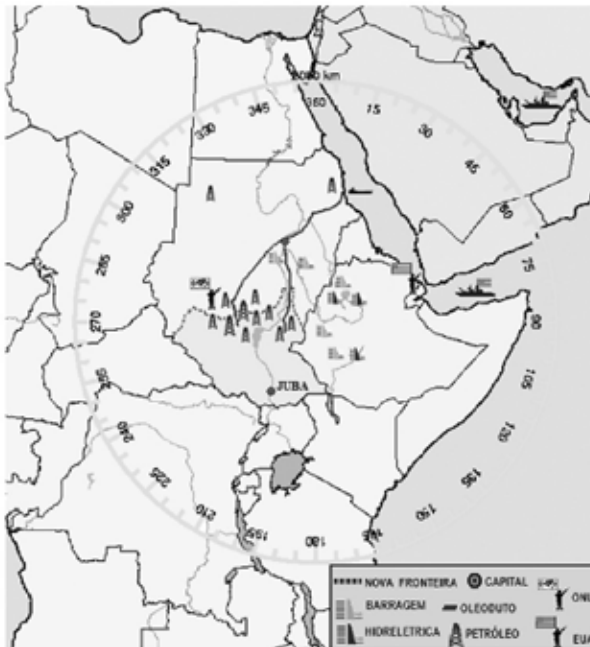
In the context of the internal conflicts that emerged in the post-independence period, the securitization of issues in South Sudan has led to the creation of new irregular armies, militias and rebel groups in various locations.

In the economic field, according to Oliveira e Silva (2011), the new country has virtually no comprehensive transport, energy or communications infrastructure. The available infrastructure is concentrated in Khartoum. Worse even, South Sudan has only 50 km of paved roads in a 619,000 km<sup>2</sup> territory. Most asphalted roads are located on the outskirts of Juba, and some of the already lackluster infrastructure inherited from

the colonial era was destroyed in the first civil war (1955–1972), never to be rebuilt. What little remained got destroyed during the second civil war.

Paradoxically, South Sudan is the third largest oil producer in sub-Saharan Africa (DASH, 2012). The country's independence has opened new channels for transnational partnership and export dividends in the oil industry, as illustrated in the figure below. The current process of oil globalization, the diversification of supply and demand, and the transnationalisation of exploration, production and transportation processes have allowed emerging African countries to use their oil resources as a bargaining chip in diplomacy, so their respective foreign policies can be achieved.

### Sudan and South Sudan in the regional context



Source: Oliveira e Silva (2011)

For decades, the United States counted among the top oil explorers in the Sudan and South Sudan region. However, the Sudanese government's relationship with terrorist cells, the insecurity in the region, the condemnation of the President of Sudan in the International Criminal



Court and the economic embargoes imposed on the country have allayed investments. In fact, the main American oil company, Chevron, decided to leave the region before the signing of the peace agreement in 2005.

The country's power void was filled mainly by China, who bought the US concessions. Talisman, a Canadian company, remained the only Western company exploring oil during the 1990s. It also withdrew in 2003, due to internal pressures against Sudan's human rights abuses and the centrality of oil income for the Sudanese government. This withdrawal opened space for India (LARGE, 2012). Thus, Asian companies – and Chinese ones in particular – dominate the current South Sudanese oil exploration scenario. Presently, the three main companies are: (1) Dar Petroleum, with 41% of its shares held by the Chinese National Petroleum Company (CPNC), 40% by the Malaysian company Petronas, and smaller shares by Sudapet, a Sudanese state-owned company, SINOPEC, a Chinese company, and the Egyptian and Kuwaitian Holding Company; (2) The Sudd Petroleum Operations Company, jointly owned by Petronas and Nilepet, a South Sudanese state-owned company; (3) The Greater Pioneer Operations Company, with 40% of its shares owned by CPNC, 30% by Petronas, 25% by the Indian Natural Gas Petroleum Corporation, and 5% by Nilepet. Thirty-five percent of oil profits go to companies, while the remaining 65% correspond to 98% of the South Sudanese government's budget (WASSARA, 2014). Total, a French oil company, remains the only Western company in the country. It operates in the state of Jonglei, but no oil reserves have yet been found in its concession territory. The South Sudanese policy for oil exploration has been to require the presence – even in a minority condition, if need be – of its state-owned company alongside the major foreign exploration companies. It also requires the participation of the South Sudanese labor force in oil extraction initiatives.

Since establishing relations with the African countries, but especially from the 1990s onwards, China has been developing projects in several areas. Oil and other natural resources represent an important part of Beijing's investment on the continent. Faced with Beijing's growth, the strategy of the great Western powers is to progressively rein in China's access to natural resources, particularly in Central Asia. This has led the Chinese government to turn to developing countries, especially in Africa, a continent which, in 2007, had approximately 10% of the world's oil reserves. In this sense, Sudan and Angola – who in 2000 surpassed Saudi Arabia as the largest oil suppliers to Beijing – may

be among China's most important African energy partners (VISENTINI, 2014).

Since South Sudan's overwhelming vote for breaking with Sudan in 2011, the government's main concern has been to resume the flow of oil, following disagreements with Khartoum. This occurred only in 2014. From that point on there have been minor armed rebellions, border clashes and cattle thefts in the region, but this happened far away from Juba. Compounding this instability, signs of friction emerged within the ruling party, the SPLM, when President Salva Kiir, an ethnic Dinka – the country's largest ethnic group – fired his deputy Riek Machar. Machar is part of the country's second largest ethnic community, the Nuer.<sup>7</sup>

Armed conflict began in December 2013 when soldiers loyal to either President Kiir (a Dinka) or to former Vice President Riek Machar (a Nuer) fought in the capital after months of mounting political tensions. In December 2015, President Kiir dissolved the 10 regional states of South Sudan and created 28 new ones, fueling further conflict in many areas. The conflict has led to serious abuse against civilians by government forces and opposition fighters. Another 200,000 people were forced to flee their homes, bringing the total number of displaced people to 2.4 million. Those left behind, including people with disabilities, were subjected to grave acts of violence<sup>8</sup>.

Worse even, the SPLA and other armed groups are known to have recruited young people and children as reinforcements during the 2nd Civil War campaigns, showing total disrespect for legal instruments such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. In 2012, South Sudan finally created an action plan to demobilize approximately 17,000 children associated with armed struggle (ENSOR, 2013). The government is still working with international organizations on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) missions.

By analyzing South Sudan's independence and its characteristics, we can infer that religious and ethnic differences, poor basic infrastructure, the consequences of long years of civil war and economic, political and military divergences, possibly allied to China's interests, are the main factors behind the alarming referendum outcome<sup>9</sup> that has resulted in the

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<sup>7</sup> Available from: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-25427965>. Access on: May 14, 2018.

<sup>8</sup> Available from: <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/south-sudan>. Access on: May 14, 2018.

<sup>9</sup> Available from: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/feb/07/sudan-referendumresult->

independence of South Sudan, as well as increased frictions and further instability. This scenario has a direct effect over the security of South Sudan's population.

It is noteworthy that a possible solution to the armed conflict, which began anew in 2013, will not necessarily overcome the issues affecting the dignity of the human person. Violent behavior may cease, but structural, political, economic and social factors shall remain (MIALL; RAMSBOTHAM; WOODHOUSE, 2005 apud DUARTE, 2016).

## THE UNMISS AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

It worth noting that the difficulties suffered by the people of South Sudan are framed by security problems concerning the well-being of the nation, the state, the individual, the ethnic group, the environment, and the planet itself (BUZAN, 2012).

According to Buzan (2012), within international security studies, the word "security" always appears linked to a "hyphenated concept." Security encompasses four structuring conceptual problems. One of these problems regards its links with areas beyond military security. In this sense, ensuring security means attributing an equal priority to human issues and violence, based on a sectoral view of how societal, economic, and environmental aspects – as well as health, development and gender – affect security.

Human security lies within the scope of a concept that emerged from the 1994 Human Development report by the UN Development Programme. The report proposes that human beings must be the main reference point for the evaluation of security issues, a category that should include chronic threats such as poverty, hunger, diseases, repression and other attacks on human integrity. In this sense, the report marks a shift from a state-centered conception of security to a human-centered one. Such a concept of security also encompasses sudden and painful disruptions in people's daily living standards (REDIN; BARBOSA, 2014; PARIS, 2001). According to Paris (2001), human security is comprised of the following elements:

- ... (1) economic security (e.g., freedom from poverty);
- (2) food security (e.g., access to food); (3) health

security (e.g., access to health care and protection from diseases); (4) environmental security (e.g., protection from such dangers as environmental pollution and depletion); (5) personal security (e.g., physical safety from such things as torture, war, criminal attacks, domestic violence, drug use, suicide, and even traffic accidents); (6) community security (e.g., survival of traditional cultures and ethnic groups as well as the physical security of these groups); and (7) political security (e.g., enjoyment of civil and political rights, and freedom from political oppression) (PARIS, 2001, p. 90).

There is also the goal of international security, as put by the United Nations Charter: “to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security” (UN, 1945). Conceptually speaking, studies on international security can be divided into two currents: (1) the *realist*, which is centered on the state, seen as the true subject of international law. Such a state strives to master the language of security policy while working within the bounds of some anarchy, and imagining security as synonym of power. (2) the *idealist*, in which the current discourse of international communities is included. It broadens the concept of international security by considering the human person as a subject of international protection, and orchestrates its activities along with other security communities and international organizations (REDIN; BARBOSA, 2014; ADLER; BARNETT, 1998).

In this sense, the UN was created as an international organization aimed precisely at promoting international peace and security. Together with its member states, its charter proposes to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women, and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom (UN, 1945).

Hemmer (apud FREITAS, 2014) states that, with the division of Sudan into two sovereign political systems, new parameters were set for the Sudanese peace mission: it had to be restricted to the territory of South Sudan, and its interests would be mainly focused on peacebuilding and helping the young state fulfill its legitimate objectives.

On July 9, 2011, South Sudan became the youngest country in the world. The birth of the Republic of South Sudan was the culmination of a six-year peace process that began with the signing of the Global Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005 (UNMISS, 2011).

The post-separation instability in the country was a result of the several challenges faced by the government of South Sudan as a result of more than three decades of conflict. This far-reaching conflict involved the Justice and Equality Movement, the Sudan Liberation Army, the Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M), the issues of underdevelopment, intertribal violence, lack of national cohesion, poor nation-building, endemic corruption and lack of basic infrastructure, as well as the region's proximity to the main problem-points of the continent, not to mention illicit arms trafficking routes (OLOWU, 2011).

Thus, after the independence, the South Sudanese situation remained threatening to international peace and security in the region. In accordance with Chapter VII of the UN Charter and by means of Resolution 1996/2011 of the Security Council – which has China as a permanent member – this resulted in the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) on July 9, 2011 (UNMISS, 2014), with an initial period of one year, to be renewed as needed.

The UNMISS mandate covered three broad areas, including the consolidation of peace and the promotion of long-term peacebuilding for economic development in the region. The mission would also support the South Sudanese government in the exercise of its responsibilities, especially in regards to conflict prevention, mitigation and resolution, as well as the protection of civilians. Finally, the mission would also provide support to the government in security matters, establishing the rule of law and strengthening justice (UNMISS, 2011 apud FREITAS, 2014). Moreover, it was decided that UNMISS would act in accordance with the terms set in Chapter VII, allowing the mission to take all necessary measures, including the use of force, to protect civilians, humanitarian workers and its own personnel (HEMMER, 2013, apud FREITAS, 2014).

Initially, UNMISS was comprised of 7,000 military personnel – distributed among military liaison officers and team officers – and 900 non-military personnel, including civilian police. An adequate civilian component was necessary for the creation of a technical-expertise unit geared towards the investigation of human-rights abuse (UNMISS, 2014).

The UNMISS action has been perceived by some South Sudanese authorities as very beneficial, both in terms of mitigation and local conflict resolution, especially when considering its facilitating role (HEMMER, 2013, apud FREITAS, 2014). In accordance with its strategy to protect civilians, UNMISS has committed itself to protecting South Sudanese

citizens when the state is unable or unwilling to do so (for reasons related to its difficulty in establishing itself as a politically stable country, or humanitarian issues such as refugee displacement, lack of basic infrastructure, food and water etc.).

In such circumstances, the mission could act either in an advisory capacity, assisting the South Sudanese government's security forces, or go so far as preventively deploying UN troops in high-risk areas. It could also provide refuge to civilians seeking protection at UNMISS premises (HEMMER, 2013, apud FREITAS, 2014).

According to Freitas (2014), in Jonglei State the UNMISS and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) have been able to reintegrate about two hundred children, who had been abducted by armed groups such as the Ugandan Lord's Resistance Army. There has been a considerable improvement in the humanitarian conditions of refugee camps, especially with regard to the availability of clean water and basic sanitation. Nutrition and mortality indicators for this population, however, have fallen below the emergency threshold (UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL – S/2013/140, 2013). Since the mission was deployed in these territories, there has been an increase in the prevention of militia attacks by means of monitoring and early warning techniques, used to notify ground and air patrols. Furthermore, UNMISS has increased its military patrols in the Lakes, Unity and Warrap states, as well as in strategic locations in Jonglei State, where violence rates are still high.

Rolandsen et al (2015) state that neighboring countries, led by Ethiopia, accepted responsibility early in the negotiations and appointed Ethiopian diplomat Seyoum Mesfin as chairman of the mediation process carried out by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). He is assisted by Lazarus Sumbeiywo, who mediated the 2005 peace agreement between the Sudan government and the SPLM. The IGAD is comprised of eight countries and is well known for its efforts to secure peace in Sudan and Somalia. It has not become a fully functioning multilateral organization and remains dependent on donations from Western countries, which occur on an ad hoc basis (Rolandsen et al, 2015).

[IGAD's] monitoring and verification mechanism was based instead on the use of UNMISS force protection capacity – already mandated by the UN Security Council. Additional Ethiopian, Kenyan and Rwandan troops were deployed as part of the reinforcement of UNMISS and operated under the

same UN mandate as the rest of UNMISS. However, this is not a force capable of either protecting Southern Sudanese civilians or deterring the warring parties from committing atrocities or breaching agreements (ROLANSEN et al, 2015, p. 97).

Although there are still a number of frictions, since 2012, the UN – via UNMISS and in conjunction with the African Union and IGAD – has contributed to agreements between Sudan and South Sudan and the internally conflicting rebel parties. This includes the creation of a demilitarized zone, a mutual understanding on economic and oil issues, the global management of the borders separating the two Sudanese states, and security measures to cease hostilities in border regions.

## FRICIONS IN THE EXECUTION OF THE UNMISS MANDATE

“Friction, as we choose to call it, is the force that makes the apparently easy so difficult” (CLAUSEWITZ, 1984, p. 121). Based on this definition, we now address concepts related to friction and their application within peace operations in South Sudan.

From Clausewitz’s work, Watts (1996) systematized eight main elements of friction: the intrinsically dangerous nature of war; the physical demands of war; the imperfection of the information on which war is based; internal resistance to the military force itself; chance, the consequences of which combatants can never foresee; the physical and political limits to the use of military force; uncertainty about enemy capabilities; and disconnection between the ends and means of war (FERREIRA, 2008, p. 16, our translation).

The geographical characteristics of South Sudan present natural obstacles to the employment of troops that are not acclimated to the region. In the recent past, an Indian military peacekeeping contingent was deployed in South Sudan’s Upper Nile state as part of the UNMISS. The region has an equatorial climate with high temperatures, high rainfall and very high humidity. The White Nile river is the predominant geographical feature of South Sudan and most of its settlements are clustered around this water source. The region has loamy soil. During the rainy season,

there are serious sewage problems, and the ground becomes slippery. The conflict affected areas of South Sudan with poor sanitation, lack of clean water and overcrowded living conditions. These are at greater risk of waterborne diseases such as cholera (WHO, 2005, apud HAZRA, 2013).

The country's administrative political structure is incipient. Since its independence on July 9, 2011, South Sudan has been experiencing a very rapid and very chaotic state building process. New ministries, departments, committees, legislation, and other official initiatives are being established and reinstated, nominated, renamed, canceled, and replaced with other versions as the new government strives to solidify its nascent legitimacy. Significant distortions are evident in the way children are treated in the country's various legal systems (customary, domestic, international, and human rights) (ENSOR 2013).

According to Riak (2013), corruption is recognized as the biggest hindrance in the way of South Sudanese development. While there is no consensual definition for corruption, the evidence of its damaging impact on economic and social welfare is ever-growing.

Rolandsen et al (2015) state that, during the spring of 2014, the implementation of an IGAD monitoring and verification mechanism was underway, with the support of the East African Protection and Determination Force (PDF). However, IGAD and its members did not contribute funding for this initiative, expecting international agencies and organizations to provide technical and logistical support. The African Union had little or no resources to contribute; the UN Security Council refused to fund a non-mandated force, and Western countries were reluctant to fully commit to the concept, which made it difficult to deploy military forces in the region in order to monitor the security situation.

Another obstacle to IGAD negotiations was the involvement of some member countries in the conflict, especially Uganda and Sudan. At the request of the government of South Sudan, and tacitly tolerated by other neighboring countries, Ugandan forces were deployed to assist in protecting infrastructure and preventing an escalation of the conflict. However, these forces also ended up actively participating in military operations against the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A). The latter has repeatedly called for the withdrawal of Ugandan forces, whose presence continues to violate the cessation of hostilities agreement. In February 2014, Uganda agreed to the gradual removal of its troops from South Sudan, but only after the deployment of a combined



emergency force in Africa. Thus, Ugandan forces remain in South Sudan, bearing an undisclosed mandate (ROLANDSEN et al, 2015, p. 97).

Still in regards to security and especially the actions of armed groups in the south, Oliveira e Silva (2011) point out that Sudan's basic-infrastructure deficiencies are the main explanation for the federal government's inability to defeat these groups. Under these conditions, the government was incapable of sending and supplying significant military contingents across a country practically the size of Argentina, but lacking any integrated roads whatsoever. This made the provision of logistical support to mechanized infantry forces (such as armored vehicles) impossible, as there were no roads linking the center of the country to the southern region. Today, the same problem is faced by Khartoum in its attempts to resolve the conflict in Darfur. Control of the region has definitely slipped through the hands of the federal government, who is incapable of imposing law and order or even prevent local groups from fighting each other.

In the psychosocial area, the most problematic issue for the new nation concerns ethnic conflicts in the Sudanese territory. Sudan has been culturally dominated by a Sunni Arab majority approximately 34-million strong. In South Sudan, however, there is an ethnic mix of approximately 200 culturally interdependent groups, most with their own languages and traditions. In this context, the Dinka ethnicity has maintained its supremacy over the southern territory, especially in the Jonglei region, northwest of Juba, an excellent land for livestock, with large water reserves. In the months following the independence, conflicts intensified between the Arab nomadic tribes and black Dinka farmers over the right of access to these natural riches, resulting in the displacement of thousands (SÁNCHEZ, 2011, apud FREITAS, p. 4-5).

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

South Sudan is the newest independent country in the world, and has accumulated a number of tensions that hinder its development. Ethnic conflicts cause insecurity and have serious humanitarian consequences, increasing the flow of refugees and internally displaced persons. This has caused an alarming increase in the country's poverty and hunger indicators. New countries face social, economic, military and political challenges, especially in Africa, due to a convulsive past linked to the Partition of Africa and European colonization as a whole.

It is worth noting that China, a permanent member of the UN Security Council, has a close relationship with South Sudan and can be considered a partner of the country within the United Nations, thus able to seek conflict resolution on its behalf. This is corroborated by the fact that China sent its peacemakers to South Sudan as part of the UN mission in September 2014. The current contingent of Chinese peacekeepers in the mission is comprised of approximately 800 military personnel<sup>10</sup>, which highlights China's interest in resolving South Sudan's internal conflicts.

According to Kaldor, "[...] human security is about the everyday security of individuals and the communities in which they live rather than the security of states and borders; it is about the security of Afghans and Americans and Europeans, not just the security of the United States or Europe" (KALDOR, 2011, p. 4). This definition voices the importance of South Sudan's pacification for international and regional organizations, as evidenced by the humanitarian assistance actions coordinated by the UN, IGAD and the African Union in the young country.

Paris (2001) notes that the notion of human security has been employed as many different things: a rallying cry, a political campaign, a set of beliefs about the sources of violent conflict, a new conceptualization of security, and a guide for policymakers and academic researchers.

In this sense, the complexity and profundity of South Sudan's problems create a scenario of gravely threatened human security. Moreover, decades of civil wars have led to the stagnation of the country's infrastructure, hampering its development as well as its political-administrative and economic development.

According to Lima et al (2017), peace operations produce high visibility and mobilize ongoing funding from the international community. The coordination of different actors and funding streams, the use of force, and the principles of peace, sovereignty, and democracy are not necessarily shared by the social actors in countries who become the objects of international missions, creating significant implementation challenges for the agents of said missions.

In any case, the UN and the UNMISS, together with other state, non-state and supranational actors – such as the African Union – are a promising solution for the continued development of this new country. Such a peacekeeping intervention has great relevance for the resolution

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<sup>10</sup> Available from: <https://www.sputniknews.com/mundo/201607125576674-Sudao-ChinaOcidente>. Access on: May 15, 2018.

of South Sudan's internal conflicts, contributing to the maintenance of security, peace and socio-economic development.

For Brazil, the study of the problems of African countries – especially those neighboring the Central African Republic, such as South Sudan – is of paramount importance. Brazilian researchers and policymakers must take note of the various social, political, economic and military problems that affect the young country, especially considering these may be similar to or have an effect over those of the Central African Republic, a strong candidate for hosting a peace mission integrated by Brazilian troops.

Finally, as Clausewitz (1984, p. 119) puts it, "Friction is the only concept that more or less corresponds to the factors that distinguish real war from war on paper." Friction reaches its climax in the form of innumerable small, unpredictable incidents that combine to reduce a troop's overall effectiveness. This limitation, however, can be overcome by sheer willpower. Along this most difficult of paths, UNMISS has fulfilled its mandated tasks in support of the South Sudanese population, facing adversities that do not prevent it from continually striving for peace in the young nation.

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