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THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN SOUTH SUDAN (UNMISS) IN POST-CONFLICT: FROM PEACEKEEPING TO PEACE-BUILDING

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Abstract
South Sudan has continuously faced violence since independence, in which millions of people have fled from their homes and divided communities. United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), as part of the UN Blue Helmets, protects civilians, supports local governance, and connects with communities. This study explores how well UNMISS has managed to balance the need for immediate security to create long-term peace by examining conflict dynamics, socio-economic impacts, and governance challenges. Using a qualitative research design based on thematic analysis of documents and reports, this paper examines UNMISS's progress relative to persistent operational and political hurdles it faces. By analyzing mission reports, stakeholders' perspectives, and academic literature, this research examines UNMISS's progress in judicial accountability and civilian protection alongside lasting hurdles like political and operational restrictions. This research assesses the impact of different countries focusing on their own interests while working within the peacekeeping mission. UNMISS is important for reducing large-scale conflict, strengthening governance, and local participation; it also addresses the challenges arising from socio-economic constraints and international intervention that contribute to instability. This study posits that UNMISS has played a vital role in stabilizing South Sudan, but its success is often hindered by the competing interests of international actors. The mission must shift from short-term security towards a framework that prioritizes cooperation between the mission and stakeholders for an effective long-term peace.

Keywords: *conflict recovery, civilian protection, sustainable peace, United Nations, conflict resolution, community engagement*.

Introduction

In recent years, the effectiveness of international peace operations has become a major concern in global security debates. The emerging interest across disciplines- from realism to liberalism- reflects the need to uplift peacekeeping missions into peacebuilding efforts. In this framework, inspecting the role of UNMISS in post-conflict South Sudan is crucial as it identifies both promises and pitfalls. To recognize the entanglements of international interventions, it is necessary to observe the historical and political context in which they intervene. The Southern region of Sudan mostly comprises African ethnic groups, Christians, and Animists. They were marginalized by the Northern region, which mostly consists of Arab Muslims. They had religious and cultural differences, economic exploitation, and disempowerment. They even failed the peace agreement, the CPA, in 2005 and became independent in 2011 after prolonged civil wars. At first, there was optimism, but despite independence, the deep structural problems could not be solved by independence alone. Hence, political rivalries burst out into civil wars. However, various major progressions were undergoing in the country; especially from war to peace, freedom struggle to governing state, and from dependent to independent country. The multiple internal factors were including in violence like the mismanagement, leadership problems, and corruption. Foreign involvement, including financial interest and military aid from regional powers such as Egypt, the UAE, and Russia, is closely tied to Sudanese gold exports. Resultantly, in 2011, UNMISS was established to protect South Sudan, but the new state was deficient in the security structure, political institutions, and administrative capacity to govern properly. It also worked to support the

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people in that crisis by producing humanitarian workers. The mandate of UNMISS was to ensure the operationalization of Protection of Civilians (POC) sites for those families who face hunger, displacement, and emergencies. The United Nations noticed the efforts of South Sudan, in which it maintained the peace; as a result, it introduced UNMISS to help the people to talk with each other, also supporting the peace agreements between rival groups. The mission was set up to stop the country from sliding back into violence, especially because political tensions, ethnic divisions, and armed groups made the risk of another civil war high. South Sudan was one of the world's most fragile states; UNMISS was designed as a long-term stabilization mission to help the new country transition from conflict toward sustainable peace and nation-building. UNMISS works to protect people from violence by stationing peacekeepers in high-risk areas, mediating local tensions, and creating safe areas for civilians during conflict. South Sudan has gone through severe crises- famine, floods, mass displacement, and conflict; therefore, UNMISS provides a secure environment so that humanitarian agencies can deliver food, medical aid, and other emergency assistance, especially during crises of displacement. UNMISS helps state institutions by supporting local and national authorities, promoting open governance, and supporting political negotiations and the implementation of peace accords. This mission also supports Police reform, helps rebuild judicial institutions, trains law enforcement, and promotes accountability to reduce impunity and long- term stability. There are several protections in unmissed basis in the entire country over hundreds and thousands of people or entirely displaced people have been protected in those sites. UNMISS began as a traditional peacekeeping mission; its work now extends beyond just stopping violence. It now also helps to build the foundations for long-term peace, supporting reconciliation, healing divided communities, and strengthening the institutions that can prevent further wars. Evaluating the effectiveness of UNMISS matters a lot because when conflict arose again in 2013, it became clear that people were enduring in the UN. Assessing the mission helps us understand whether UNMISS actually made communities safer and supported real peace, and what must change to better protect lives in the future. Prior research has shown the involvement of UNMISS in peacebuilding in South Sudan. Most of the literature focuses on the liberal peacebuilding model, which merely includes community issues and domestic disputes. It has been shown that UNMISS kept its focus on local realities rather than structural constraints. Consequently, it created a huge difference between international standards and community realities. Peacebuilding should be adjusted locally. Some authors state that a Western-style solution is incompetent to resolve the conflicts. Instead, a liberal peace plan is locally worth it. Moreover, it has been stated that a hybrid form of peace leads to harmony when the external efforts are merged with local criteria. The local communities are more influential against international peace efforts. According to some authors, traditional leaders manage all the affairs locally, but on the other hand, their interference might have affected the policies of UNMISS. Hence, the results become weak due to the inconsistency between them. In addition to this, the four main core tasks of UNMISS were focused on the protection of civilians and maintenance; Blue Helmets played a major role in this regard. UN peacekeeping is directly connected to socio-economic consequences, as peace missions act as engines for local growth. Beyond providing security, UN missions act as economic catalysts by integrating local labour and infrastructure into their operations, thereby creating a financial incentive for sustained peace. However, these interventions can risk causing market distortions like inflation and professional ''brain drain.'' Effective peacebuilding requires managing these socio-economic impacts to ensure stability. The major challenges include environmental politics and excessive external interference. The formation of (POC) sites operated smoothly for local peacebuilding, but alternatively, many scholars raised concerns about the risks. This paper analyses the progress regarding institutional strengthening and governance support. Moreover, the limitations

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include lack in aiding the authorities, multiple barriers to advancement, unaccountability, and differences between the local and formal judiciary. Some scholars agreed on mutually working with other countries and groups, and the engagement between local governance and peacebuilders is desperately needed because mere protection is insufficient for enduring peace. Beyond external actors and international support, the tensions continued to persist, and we must reflect upon broader challenges within international systems. Top-down models of human rights protection alone cannot address deeply rooted community-based issues. This research analyses South Sudan's internal issues and aims to address the major gaps of the existing literature that include external involvement and socio-economic challenges.

The role of UNMISS is maintaining security and protecting civilians from direct and indirect socio-economic consequences, which has remained underexplored in previous literature. Most of the studies assess UNMISS as focusing on ceasefire monitoring, protection of civilians, a security-centric lens, and humanitarian access. In addition to their primary mandate, peacekeeping operations impact local livelihoods by shaping displacement patterns, social resilience, economic recovery, and access to services. However, the researchers suggest that peacekeeping targets to increase enabling humanitarian assistance, improve socio-economic conditions, reduce violence-related economic shocks, and enhance stabilising markets, and these factors are rarely evaluated in the context of South Sudan systematically. Furthermore, Protection of Civilians (POC) sites have created long-term socio-economic dependencies. While these sites provide life-saving support, they have also raised concerns regarding the sustainability of emergency protection and community structure. There is a clear research gap in understanding how UNMISS's protection and peacekeeping activities influence the long-term socio-economic outcomes, such as community resilience, recovery, and inequality. Addressing this gap is essential for evaluating whether UNMISS supports not only short-term stability but also sustainable peace. Another important area of concern is the impact of governance support and institutional strengthening in the post-conflict period. The United Nations Peace Building Commission (PBC) prioritizes state capacity development, governance reform, and the rule of law to ensure that post-conflict nations can provide services, accountability, and justice. PBC plays an important role in coordination and an advisory role by bringing together national and international donors, while UN agencies help in post-conflict states and institutional recovery. Thus, countries like Liberia and Sierra Leone have strengthened the justice sector, public administration development, and electoral reforms. It contributes to improving the governance structures in PBC after conflict. The contribution addresses the measurable progress to rebuild political stability and promote state institutions. Therefore, governance performance that supports the PBC remains uneven. The scholars' focus on influencing the Commission is constrained by its dependence on member state consensus, its advisory nature, and it can stop the implementation of reforms (de Coning, 2018). In conclusion, actual governance outcomes vary across contexts while the institutional frameworks may enhance their efficiency on paper. This reveals a significant research gap regarding how international peacebuilding mechanisms can move beyond coordination to ensure sustainable institutional strengthening.

The most important objectives include;

- To evaluate whether UNMISS's engagements assist durable peace and strengthen freedom of expression while examining how external interventions influence its peacebuilding efforts.
- To assess the role of UNMISS in strengthening accountability, rule of law and local justice mechanisms and to analyse how weak governance structures and external political pressure limit these efforts.

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- To analyse the impact of socio-economic challenges on peacebuilding outcomes and how these challenges affect the long -term sustainability of UNMISS.

Research Questions:

In line with these objectives, the main research questions guiding this study are;

1. How effective has UNMISS been in promoting civilian protection, security, accountability and durable peace in post-conflict South Sudan, considering the influence of external interventions?
2. How do socio-economic challenges and weak governance affect UNMISS's peacebuilding and long-term stability efforts in South Sudan?

Literature Review

South Sudan got freedom on July 9, 2011, becoming an emerging nation. The independence was soon overshadowed by internal conflicts and civil wars due to multiple factors, including political rivalry, militarization of politics, lack of inclusive governance, weak rule of law, as well as broader regional and socio-economic pressures. UNMISS was formed to rebuild Sudan during its early state-building phase. Its mandate includes civilian safety, working with humanitarian institutions, strengthening governance, and encouraging legal and institutional development. Many scholars have examined how UNMISS has been contributing to achieving these aims for peacekeeping, which is quite a difficult but necessary journey from war to peace. This literature review analyses key academic contributions, evaluation reports, and policy studies that examine the strengths, limitations, and overall performance of UNMISS in a post-conflict environment. A major part of this literature focuses on the liberal peacebuilding model, which is a common framework used by the UN. Recent literature that has been known to human beings for the cosmopolitan delicacy and peacebuilding; the related issues and concentration are widely brought towards community inclinations or the corresponding association with domestic dispute variability. The information is taken from the research of the United Nations, civilians' peacekeeping to pop up the domestic peacebuilding. (Diana Felix DA Costa 2012), argues that beneficial endeavors are being made to frame the peacebuilding ventures for regional state of affairs, despite notable institutional impediments curbing the impact of these efforts. This creates a difference between international expectations and local social dynamics. Other authors also highlighted that peacebuilding might be adopted for their local contexts. Mac Ginty (2011) describes that international peacebuilding may take an outside, Western style give solution about how local communities resolve their conflict. This type of peace is called liberal peace; it also plans to overlook elders, mediation, tradition, and community-led practices. He also argues that real peace works best compared to liberal, when outside efforts match local ways, resultantly it generates a more balanced and "hybrid" approach to peace. Richmond (2010) explains how people are disempowered on the ground, but they can regain their voice and enhance or motivate peacebuilding. It describes that local communities may push back against creating mixed or "hybrid" forms of peace and top-down international peace efforts. These arguments support the view that UNMISS needed deeper engagement with local systems to increase its peacebuilding impact. Karlsrud and Da Costa (2012b), in their field report, further highlight that many early UNMISS peacebuilding activities were designed without enough understanding of community-level conflict drivers. They report traditional leaders and community elders play a major role in managing disputes, yet these structures were underused by international actors. This theoretical debate shows that internal design problems hindered the effectiveness of UNMISS during its early years. The early peace-building outcomes are weakened by the mismatch and imbalance between the liberal peace-building model and the South Sudanese structure. After the 2013 crisis, the protection of civilians and stabilisation tasks were more focused and under consideration by

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UNMISS. Research shows a detailed examination of UNMISS effectiveness. Based on the report, UNMISS' major command revolved around four sectors that aim to provide an overview of protecting civilians, facilitating humanitarian operations, promoting human rights, and supporting peace agreements. Several core areas focused on by UN Peacekeepers, often called Blue Helmets, are civilian protection, facilitating humanitarian operations, promoting human rights, and supporting peace agreements. (Carpenter, E.H.2025) UN peacekeeping is increasingly linked to socio-economic outcomes other than the provision of security or peace. UNMISS is facing challenges in environmental politics as climate change, resource scarcity, and environmental conflicts are challenging peacekeeping and civilian protection. (Tobias Bohmelt, 2024). Another major challenge faced by UNMISS is the interference of international peacebuilders that may undermine local governance by creating parallel authority structures, depleting local talent through 'brain drain' to NGOs, and fostering a cycle of aid dependency that marginalizes domestic leadership. Almost 17000 troops, 2000 police and 2000 civilians have been provided with significant resources for multidimensional peacekeeping operations. (Adam Day et al. 2024) A growing part of the literature argues that protection and peacebuilding are closely linked. UN focused on protection of civilian (POC) sites to protect vulnerable civilians. Although they have saved many lives, on the other hand, they failed to save many people in other areas due to the consumption of many UNMISS'S resources. It was also observed that (POC) sites not only provide physical safety but also became places where community engagement and peace dialogues occurred and created opportunities for local-level peacebuilding even during active conflict. Peacebuilding focuses on creating conditions where communities can live without fear. Donais and Solomon (2011). Similarly, Donais and Pendle (2024) examined communities in Bor and Ler to understand that South Sudan was affected due to long-term conflicts, and to reflect the correlation between well-being and protection of immigrants; public authorities could disclose expertise, resources, and conditions are provided successfully for protection. However, some scholars warn us about the risks. Even though where the civil people are under international protection, there the security depends upon communities in Sudan. UNMISS conservation regarding civil people (POC) reflects the functioning of customary law in a very unique context. The court does not only provide a mechanism for community conflict resolution, but they are also integral to the invigoration of local norms and structures for protection Overall, the literature shows that protection contributed to peacebuilding, but was not enough on its own without political engagement and governance reforms. Another major area of research examines how UNMISS contributed to rule of law and accountability. The study of UN OIOS shows the progress of UNMISS in supporting police reform, helping judiciary and legal institutions, training law enforcement, and noticing human rights violations. (UN Office of Internal Oversight Services, 2024). The major challenge faced by UNMISS is assisting the governing body. Their principal objective includes advocating institutions and promoting ordinance. Consequently, corruption and weak institutional structures continue to be the obstacles that obstruct advancement. Human rights abuses are happening, and no one is being held responsible for that. The perpetrators are not afraid of consequences; a culture develops where people believe they can commit violations. This lack of accountability leads to the hindrance for the mission from succeeding. (AE Minco, 2024) The reformation of the rule of laws become even more harder due to the reason that the local justice system is often more trusted than formal courts. Moreover, UNMISS had limited access to remote areas, which did not permit it to provide permanent rule of law across the country. (Schomerus et al. 2010) UNMISS has limited access to remote areas, which did not permit it to provide permanent rule of law across the country. (Day et al. 2019) This study seeks to identify the key UN peace-building strategies, examine how local perceptions shape the plan of action, and assess the overall effectiveness to promote peace. Several studies

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examine how local communities view UNMISS. Kelly Otieno Opiyo (2024). This research is based on the idea that countries and groups can work together through shared institutions and peaceful methods to solve the root problems causing conflict in South Sudan. A mixed method was used, combining quantitative analysis processed with SPSS version 28 with qualitative analysis through thematic interpretation. Many felt that the mission focused too much on urban areas and did not address needs in remote regions. While research on South Sudan describes how the line between local armed groups and government has never been transparent. However, the community defense group Nuer White Army Gelweng and Titweng, which began as cattle protectors, were often drawn into the SPLM/A's fights. Pendle(2015) describe these groups obtained the local legitimacy even as the CPA (2005) explain how the formal status stopped them producing the hybrid actors that were both semi-state agents and community forces in their Political Analysis (2017 report), illustrate the agents in their Kindersley and Rolandsen that South Sudan's local governance describe about the peace operations and political economy and need to connect with these local systems. This maintenance of security alone is not enough to rebuild sustainable peace. Although previous studies examine the role of UNMISS in the protection of civilians and rule of law, the existing literature still shows a huge gap. Most of the studies narrate the involvement of UNMISS in (POC), ceasefire monitoring, mediation, and its performance, but there is less discussion on long-term effects, and they do not include local community opinions, especially from rural areas. There is no discussion on the effectiveness of components like military, police, and civilian. Moreover, it's not explained how South Sudan's political leaders restrict UNMISS activities. Many articles state that human rights violations continue, impunity persists, but there is limited data or evidence on whether UNMISS has improved accountability. There is a notable lack of research on how UNMISS engages with ministries or supports capacity building, with a particular focus on the efficacy of specific institutional reforms that have been enacted. Furthermore, almost no research exists on how access barriers affect the delivery of justice in the most affected regions. While some researchers observe that UNMISS works alongside traditional community courts, others examine the significant gap between local realities and international objectives due to the focus on liberal peace. In particular, how international support for armed groups is tied to resource exploitation remains underexplored. Additionally, existing literature provides limited analysis of how socio-economic vulnerabilities and governance shortcomings affect the long-term effectiveness of UNMISS in fostering sustainable peace. Scholars have agreed that UNMISS played a vital role in protecting civilians, reducing violence, and maintaining law and order. The mission's (POC) sites, humanitarian assistance, and monitoring of human rights have saved lives and provided sustainability during years of conflict. However, the literature points out the challenges as well. UNMISS continued to face mistrust from political elites, struggled to influence national governance, and encountered major difficulties in strengthening institutions of the rule of law. However, the local armed groups, traditional leaders, and community courts maintained a significant part in providing security and justice. Overall, scholars agree that sustainable peace requires protection, political reforms, and strong partnership with local communities. The issues can be resolved by valuing the opinions of people. Military, police, and civilians must be trained exceptionally for any kind of sudden situations. There should be a middle ground between UNMISS, political leaders, and traditional community courts of Sudan regarding problem-solving. There is an utmost need to improve accountability, engagement with ministries, supporting capacity building, focusing on most affected areas, and controlling global interference. Such policies should be made that plans which are used to design to avoid any inconvenience at the time of utter crisis must be implemented.

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Another important gap in the literature shows the significance of UNMISS that contributes to strengthening the state institutions and protects the governance reforms. There are different studies that explain the UNMISS's essential to implement rule of law institutions, judicial capacity-building, and police reform. However, limited empirical observations are given for the actual outcomes of those questions. So, the previous research often marked political interference and persistent corruption. These factors carry a weak accountability phenomenon and provide minimal evidence on whether UNMISS connect and it has enhanced the institutional performance or reduced credibility. So, the connection between traditional justice and formal state institutions systems remains in specific way explored. Researcher's focus that local authorities and customary courts continue to play a dominant role in dispute resolution, particularly in rural areas, and UNMISS's connection with these structures that's remain inconsistent and improperly documented (Schomerus et al., 2010; Pendle, 2015). This produces a gap in evaluating how international governance can help and be achieved in hybrid justice environments. Resultantly, there is a deficiency in the research examining how institutions help the initiatives translate into durable situations so the governance outcomes could operate, especially at the local level. By mentioning this gap, it is essential to address whether UNMISS has moved through the temporary stabilisation towards rebuilding an inclusive, accountable, and resilient governance.

Discussion

This discussion aims to examine the credibility of UNMISS in peacekeeping in the post-conflict of South Sudan. It describes what challenges it faces, how the Mission has performed, and which factors affect its ability to move from peacekeeping to peace-building. This explanation is maintained around some important factors or themes that describe the effectiveness of UNMISS, limitations, challenges, governance, and rule of law. It is important at the local and international approaches. The performance of UNMISS has been broadly discussed in literature and researchers offering mixed evaluations of its success. Most of the researchers discuss that UNMISS has played a crucial role in preventing large-scale violence, especially its civilian protection mandate. The Protection of Civilians (POC) sites are also seen as one of UNMISS's major successes, as those areas offered protection for hundreds of thousands of people during times of fighting. This describes that UNMISS was especially necessary in typical situations where people needed protection from violence. This describes that UNMISS was effective in harsh situations where immediate physical protection was necessary. Other scholars argue that UNMISS also contributes to its positive role in humanitarian assistance by producing relatively secure situations for aid delivery. UNMISS facilitated access for humanitarian organizations whenever a specific region faced the challenge of displacement. However, some researchers argue that the mission's credibility was limited in addressing the root cause of conflict, but UNMISS was able to calm the violence temporarily and faced difficulties in protecting lasting peace and meaningful political reconciliation. They suggest that UNMISS contributed to protection and humanitarian support rather than sustainable peace and faced operational and structural restrictions that minimized its effectiveness. Some of them suggest that the mission's top-down approach is important for local conflict dynamics and aligned with a marginalized traditional conflict resolution practice. So, there is no better way to ensure long-term peace than to build the rule of law. Peace and the rule of law can go hand in hand. The rule of law gets stronger as the Joint Special Mobile Court starts working again in Gette. The mobile court provides instant justice and accountability and reduces a large number of cases and sorts of carbon immunity. But the weakened rule of law and governance lead to various challenges. Government officials are not intent on investigating individuals who have carried out gross human rights violations and crimes that have been reported since the start of the conflict. The cause of this issue is the lack

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of facilities and immobility. The established civilian courts and judicial system in the political wheel have no capacity to try perpetrators. The rule of law is not implemented due to fear of reprisals. Most of the judges resigned primarily due to the threat of reprisals because their decisions might go against the executive. In addition to this, the major issue that is fuelling injustices in the country is that power-sharing agreements have not been implemented and revitalised, and a ceasefire agreement has been violated. In South Sudan, the local justice system is being followed. The parallel justice system is informal and does not meet human rights standards. South Sudanese rely on the traditional system; therefore, it's been difficult for UNMISS to support formal rule of law institutions. Scholars asked that international peace building efforts may apply uniformly from the solutions in different conflict settings. These tend to specify community-level power structures, cultural traditions, and historical grievances, and at the end, the policies that work from one country may be harmful or ineffective, and it also limits their long-term impact. But in the liberal peacebuilding model, which enhances the market reforms, democracy, and strong state institutions, is at the central point of debate. In proponent areas, these elements are important for stability, and proponents contend that implementing these liberal norms can clash with local priorities and practices. This approach specifies external political agendas over the needs of affected populations. In contrast, the literature also increasingly explores the worth of local ownership. This argument suggests that sustainable peace is more likely important in which the local groups, including community leaders, civil society organizations, and traditional authorities, are actively involved in designing as well implementing peace building initiatives. Empowering local voices helps ensure that interventions are locally accepted, more resilient and culturally relevant, over time. Despite the important role played by UNMISS in protecting civilians, monitoring ceasefires, maintaining peace and security, and supporting political processes, the literature consistently highlights a range of challenges that limit the mission's effectiveness. UN peace operations face multiple real- world problems ranging from difficult terrain and access problems, lack of resources and funding, rising humanitarian needs, to complex wars with multiple armed groups, political constraints, and limited cooperation from conflict parties. Moreover, local mistrust makes the mission's success far from assured. In addition to political and operational challenges, climate change is increasingly recognised as a significant factor that complicates peacekeeping. Climate-related risks such as extreme weather events and environmental stress can inflame instability and humanitarian needs in conflict zones. These effects operate as threat multipliers, intensifying competition over resources and emigration, that implements UNMISS mandates more complex. However, International support for UN Peacekeeping is diminishing, and challenges such as rising international tensions and critical scrutiny are becoming more prevalent. These challenges have significant implications for UNMISS' ability to move beyond short-term peacekeeping to long-term peacekeeping. Despite extensive literature on domestic peace, liberal peace plans, protecting civilians, facilitating humanitarian operations, and promoting human rights, limited attention has been given to long-term impact on sustainable peace. A significant gap exists in understanding the possible ways to overcome the root cause of tensions between the Generals of Sudan Hemedti and Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan. There is little observation on the international aid provided to RSF in place of smuggled gold and how RSF targets ethnicists to convert Darfur into Arabs' place. Sudan's rich gold resources are being illegally extracted and exported to the UAE via smuggled channels, and it finances the war and armed groups like the RSF. Russia has been linked to gold export and military alliances tied to Sudan's conflict. Gold smuggled from Sudan can pass through neighbouring countries including South Sudan, Chad, Libya and CAR on its way out. These illicit networks help fund armed factions and undermine state authority. The issue of democracy is still under research; South Sudanese need to be independent in their decisions, and laws of freedom of speech have

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to be introduced. Policies risk and lacking legitimacy reduces the sustainability. However, existing research provides limited insight into the importance of local community's opinion, but there is less discussion on its implementation. UNMISS peacebuilding activities were designed without enough understanding of community-level conflict drivers. They report that traditional leaders and community elders play a major role in managing disputes, yet these structures were underused by international actors. This theoretical debate shows that internal design problems may have limited UNMISS's effectiveness during its early years. The early peace-building outcomes are weakened by the mismatch and imbalance between the liberal peace-building model and the South Sudanese structure. Some scholars have argued that Sudanese want a tribal system. But this limits the ability of UNMISS to cope with judicial challenges, as the modern judicial system is the basic requirement for peace-building. There is limited empirical data on UNMISS' impact on accountability and justice outcomes. Without evidence, it is difficult to track whether UNMISS has reduced impunity and improved rule of law institutions. There is less discussion on the effectiveness of forces, as they are responsible for the allocation of peacekeeping resources. There is a lot of political interference, and it badly affects UNMISS operations on the ground. As a result, this weakens the idea of why mandates are difficult to implement practically. These gaps highlight the need to transform peacekeeping to peace-building and the immediate outcomes of peacekeeping. This paper seeks to address these gaps by visualising how political constraints, assessment barriers, and justice systems influence the mission's ability to support accountability and sustainable peace in South Sudan. By focusing on under-explored dimensions of peace-building, the discussion gives a sense of idea about why international interventions often struggle to achieve long-term stability. Although this discussion draws on a range of academic and policy sources, it remains limited by the unavailability of literature on certain aspects of UNMISS, specifically regarding rural communities and the judiciary. The analysis relies on secondary data as there is no primary work, which restricts the ability to gather firsthand experiences of affected populations. Additionally, most of the studies focus on peacekeeping rather than peace-building. These limitations demand that further empirical research is required for a complete understanding of the mission's contribution to peacebuilding in South Sudan.The literature shows that UNMISS has been promoting in giving the short- term security in South Sudan, but especially in the protection of civilians and supporting humanitarian assistance during periods of harsh violence. The creation of protection of civilians sites saved lives and eased suffering during moments of extreme danger. It showed the mission's ability to act quickly and protect people in crisis. However, these short- term successes did not lead to lasting peace or long- term stability. Long-standing political rivalries, ethnic tensions, weak government institutions, and poor rule of law have made it hard to build lasting peace. On top of this, day-to-day operational problems, political pressure, and decisions made mostly from the top without enough local input have further limited how effective these efforts could be. UN peacekeeping has goal to contribute the short-term socioeconomic and the improvement in post-conflict societies by increasing their security. The reduction in violence enabled communities to rebuild economic activities such as trade, agriculture, and small businesses.

The peacekeepers also enhance local employment and market depends upon hiring the local labor and purchasing services and goods, which protects income production at the community level. Therefore, these economic benefits are largely dependent on the temporary and continuous presence of the mission. But without strong institutional support and development planning, peacekeeping includes economic gains tend to stop the once missions scale down. This marks the limitation of peacekeeping in obtaining long-term socioeconomic gains on its own. It suggests that the international peace-building phenomenon supports institutional rebuilding by developing governance reforms and public administration in post-conflict states

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and obeying the rule of law, large efforts through bodies like the Peace-building Commission have involved restoring basic state functions and enhancing political stability from some point of view. Nevertheless, governance results remain uneven because of the advisory nature of international processes and limited enforcement capacity. While institutional reforms mostly show progress at the policy level, they face challenges in particular implementation. This highlights the need for stronger connections between peacekeeping operations and sustainable governance that support lasting peace-building outcomes. Overall, UNMISS has made progress in stabilizing the conflict situations, but the efforts to address the root causes of conflict and accountability emphasize the need for stronger local ownership and other institutional reform. This study uses a qualitative research design through thematic interpretation. The research uses a secondary data approach. Academic journal articles, UN evaluation reports, and policy documents related to UNMISS and peace-building in South Sudan were collected through Google Scholar, UN Digital Library, and Organizational databases. The compilation was conducted by analyzing the existing literature of various researchers. Sources published between 2010_2024 were included. The data were analyzed from various perspectives of the ongoing circumstances in South Sudan. Materials were selected based on relevance to themes such as peacekeeping, rule of law, governance, and the local justice system. The conclusion is compiled from different angles and perspectives of researchers about peacekeeping. No primary data or interviews were conducted.

Conclusion

This study explores that UNMISS has played a crucial role in protecting civilians, reducing large-scale violence, and supporting humanitarian's assistance in post conflict South Sudan. Its measures include the protection of civilian sites and the protection of human rights monitoring, which helped save lives and give people temporary safety during periods of high conflict. Therefore, these efforts make it fruitful enough to achieve lasting peace. UNMISS has struggled to promote long-term peace-building because of weak state institutions, limited accountability, political interference, and ongoing impunity. A huge challenge was the gap between international peace plans and everyday realities of local communities. Thus, the study concludes that sustainable peace needs more than external intervention and protection. UNMISS's credibility is tied to deeper local engagement, improved accountability, closer cooperation, and stronger political reforms, with these traditional and community institutions. So, many liberal peace-building approaches ignored the role of local courts, traditional leaders, and community-based ways of solving disputes, even though these systems are essential for maintaining order and trust in South Sudan.

Recommendations

UNMISS must work more effectively with local communities by involving traditional leaders and strengthening accountability through judicial reforms, police training, and mobile courts. The mission should also support the socio-economic recovery by enhancing livelihoods and reducing inequality, particularly around (POC) sites. Lasting peace in South Sudan depends on limiting external interference and promoting strong local ownership of the peace process.

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