

# Our Search for Peace

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Women in South Sudan's  
National Peace  
Processes, 2005-2018



# AUTHOR

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# ABSTRACT

South Sudanese women have played critical roles in efforts to achieve peace in South Sudan, yet their contributions have been under-recognized and under-documented. This paper contributes to remedying this by sharing women's stories of their roles in peace making through the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (2005), the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (2015) and the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (2018). It utilizes the 'Broadening Participation' framework, developed by Thania Paffenholz, to compare various modalities of participation, and contributes to critical discussions about factors that have contributed to, and hindered, women's meaningful participation in building peace in South Sudan. See the briefing note [\*Born to Lead: Recommendations on increasing women's participation in South Sudan's peace process\*](#) (Oxfam and Born to Lead, 2020) for related policy recommendations.

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***This research report*** was written to share research results, to contribute to public debate and to invite feedback on development and humanitarian policy and practice. It does not necessarily reflect the policy positions of the organizations jointly publishing it. The views expressed are those of the author and not necessarily those of the individual organizations.

**Cover photo:** South Sudanese poet Tata Joice (Photo by Bullen Chol/Oxfam).

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# ABBREVIATIONS

ARCSS: Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan  
AUPSC: African Union Peace and Security Council  
COHA: Cessation of Hostilities Agreement  
CPA: Comprehensive Peace Agreement  
CPJ: Citizens for Peace and Justice  
CSO: Civil society organization  
CTSAMM: Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism  
ECOS: European Coalition on Oil in Sudan  
HLRF: High Level Revitalization Forum  
IGAD: Intergovernmental Authority on Development  
Isis-WICCE: Isis-Women's International Cross-Cultural Exchange  
JMEC: Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission  
NESI: New Sudanese Indigenous Network  
NSWA: New Sudan Women's Association  
NSWF: New Sudan Women Federation  
R-ARCSS: Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan  
RJMEC: Reconstituted JMEC  
SCC: Sudan Council of Churches  
SDSR: Strategic Defence and Security Review  
SGBV: Sexual and gender-based violence  
SPLM/A: Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army  
SPLM/A-IO: Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army in Opposition  
SSCC: South Sudan Council of Churches  
SSCSF: South Sudan Civil Society Forum  
SSOA: South Sudan Opposition Alliance  
SSRB: Southern Sudan Referendum Bureau  
SSWAP: South Sudan Women Advocacy for Peace  
SSWGA: South Sudan Women's General Association  
SWAN: Sudanese Women's Association in Nairobi  
TGoNU: Transitional Government of National Unity of the Republic of South Sudan  
TJWG: Transitional Justice Working Group  
TNLA: Transitional National Legislative Assembly  
UNSC: United Nations Security Council  
UNSCR: United Nations Security Council Resolution

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Women have been largely excluded from formal peace processes around the world. This happens despite the fact that it is not only women's right to participate in public affairs, including peace processes, but a growing body of evidence also finds that their involvement leads to better and more durable outcomes. This understanding underpins UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), as well as subsequent resolutions, which articulate what is commonly referred to as the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. Greater understanding about the factors that support, and limit women's meaningful participation is needed as implementation of the WPS agenda continues to falter.

Women's engagement in South Sudan's peace efforts is no exception. While South Sudanese women have made substantial efforts to achieve peace throughout their country's history of conflict, their contributions have been under-recognized and under-documented. They have been combatants, peacemakers, peace advocates, caregivers and humanitarians. They have also been members of delegations in formal peace negotiations. In an effort to remedy the lack of documentation and add to the wider literature on women's contributions to peace processes, this report analyses their participation in and around the processes that led to:

- The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) of 2005 that ended the Second Sudanese Civil War between the state forces of Sudan and the Sudan People Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A), which represented the south and other marginalized areas;
- The Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (ARCSS) of 2015; and
- The Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) of 2018.

This research draws mainly on interviews with women who were involved at various levels and represented different constituencies in the Sudanese and South Sudanese civil wars and additional perspectives shared during this paper's validation workshop. Analysis of the accounts reveals that South Sudanese women employed all of the seven modalities described in Thania Paffenholz's 'Broadening Participation' framework, developed to analyse women's inclusion in peace processes:

- Direct representation at the negotiation table;
- Observer status;
- Consultations with women not involved in the negotiations;
- Involvement in commissions related to both peace processes and post-agreement bodies;
- High-level problem-solving workshops;
- Public decision making (e.g. supporting referenda); and
- Mass action, such as protests.<sup>1</sup>

## Women and the CPA

While a few women holding leadership positions within the SPLM/A were directly involved in the negotiations for the CPA and discussions around them, women were generally side-lined due to patriarchal norms. One interviewee described the inclusion of women as 'token'.<sup>2</sup> However, women's civil society organizations (CSOs) served as a powerful force through other modalities, notably through protests that raised international awareness of the conflict in South Sudan, and in mobilizing turnout for the 2011 South Sudanese independence referendum. Equally as significant, the activities around the 2005 CPA set important precedents for women's activism and engagement in subsequent peace processes.

## Women and the ARCSS

The civil war that erupted in 2013 divided South Sudanese people along political and ethnic lines. The interviewees for this research represent different parties and interests. As political and personal interests sometimes over-rode identification with and prioritization of cross-cutting women's issues, there was less of a unified front during the ARCSS process than during the CPA process. Nonetheless, women's civil society groups were committed to deepening their influence over the ARCSS as compared to their role in the development of the CPA.

It took concerted lobbying by a number of women from civil society for the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)—which mediated the peace talks—to provide an offer: if the women's organizations (representing all sides of the conflict and civil society) could unite as a single group, they would be admitted as a stakeholder group into the peace process. This was achieved, despite the difficulties, and the resultant Women's Bloc worked across party lines to encourage dialogue and compromise.

The Sudan People Liberation Movement/Army-In Opposition (SPLM/A-IO)—the main opposition group—had three women on its official delegation at the first round of the talks. This example provided additional leverage for women from the SPLM/A to demand inclusion. Women from within civil society also called for their inclusion in the ARCSS process. Ultimately, this led to twelve total seats at the table for women: six from civil society, and three each for the two parties. Two women from civil society signed the peace agreement.

The challenges raised by the women during this period included that the mediation did not prioritise space for the contribution of women's groups and civil society at large, the continuous sexual harassment during the negotiations, and competition for funding from international organizations. Even if inadvertent, one interviewee described the latter saying, 'donors were dividing the women.'

As women were considered a stakeholder group in the ARCSS process, a limited number of positions were reserved for them in the committees and institutions created by the ARCSS. This included representation from the Women's Bloc on the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JMEC) and the Strategic Defence and Security Review Board. However, few of the commissions became effective due to the rapid return to conflict less than a year after the signing of the ARCSS.

## Women and the R-ARCSS

As conflict re-escalated in July 2016, many of the women involved in the previous process continued their engagement in the R-ARCSS negotiations. The recent experiences of civil society leaders and activists proved valuable. For example, one network of women developed a seven-point agenda on how peace should be implemented, drawing on the opinions of over 500 women. Such consultative documents were valuable for the development of positions around the resumed talks. However, following a perceived need for representation of a wider constituency of women and civil society groups, more women's coalitions and groups were formed. The R-ARCSS talks had more women delegates than ARCSS. Although many were officially representing 'Academia', 'Youth' or 'Refugee' delegations, most also aligned to one of the multiple civil society coalitions. The increasingly strong voice for women resulted, for example, in the agreement of all parties to a 35% quota for women in the Executive and an increase in seats in post-agreement institutions. Ultimately, seven women were signatories to the R-ARCSS, demonstrating an increased acceptance of their place at the table.

## Impacts and obstacles

Throughout their involvement in the CPA, ARCSS and R-ARCSS processes, South Sudanese women faced obstacles and were marginalized from certain key decisions. The patriarchal nature of South

Sudanese society was one factor that limited women's effective participation. For instance, during the CPA process, women found it challenging to break through into the peace negotiations despite the contributions they made to the SPLM/A's military efforts in supportive and frontline roles. During the ARCSS process, women delegates encountered sexual harassment from male delegates. The insecurity, threats and intimidation remain problems in the present implementation phase of the R-ARCSS. Other factors impacting women's meaningful participation include limited access to funding and resources. In the present phase of ARCSS, political will lags resulting in incomplete implementation of the favourable gender provisions. Despite gaining an affirmative action quota for women in the Executive, the 25% quota was never met in the ARCSS and the 35% has not been attained in most of the R-ARCSS implementation bodies and commissions. Overall, women's direct representation at the negotiation table on behalf of parties and CSOs increased steadily from the CPA to the R-ARCSS, with a commensurate increase in influence. However, the above challenges must be addressed to support women's continued participation and to strengthen their influence in the implementation of the current agreement.

The women of South Sudan have played and continue to play a critical role in the shaping of their country. The R-ARCSS offers a roadmap to guide women's engagement and participation. A concerted effort needs to be made by all—women's coalitions, political parties, and the international community—to ensure and increase women's ongoing and meaningful participation to ultimately build sustainable peace.

A group of women from Dinka Bor singing, dancing and advocating for peace in South Sudan at the Juba Airport on 14 October 2019 – four days before the arrival of Dr. Riek Machar for Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS). Photo: Samir Bol.



# 1 INTRODUCTION

*Most things we do have a history. We are not the ones who started the world. We are not the ones who started the conversation. South Sudan is basically an oral society; we have very little we have recorded and documented. It is important to document the role and the participation of women in the various peace processes. We have to begin somewhere.*

Professor Pauline Riak, Deputy Vice Chancellor, University of Rumbek, South Sudan<sup>3</sup>

In most of the years since Sudan gained independence from the British in 1956, South Sudan ('southern Sudan' until 2011) has been embroiled in conflict. Between 1955 and 1972, and again from 1983 to 2005, southern Sudanese fought against political and economic marginalization from the Khartoum-based Sudanese government in two long civil wars, which eventually led to the independence of South Sudan on 9 July 2011. In 2013, a brutal internal armed conflict erupted in the capital city Juba and spread to the rest of the country. Two agreements later, peace is still struggling to take hold.

South Sudanese women have played critical roles in the efforts to achieve peace in South Sudan. They have taken on under-recognized and under-documented roles as active combatants, peacemakers, peace advocates, caregivers and humanitarians. They have also participated in the formal national peace processes. This report analyses women's participation in peace processes that led to:

- The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) of 2005;
- The Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (ARCSS) of 2015; and
- The Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) of 2018.

## **Box 1: Timeline of the conflict and the peace agreements in South Sudan**

**1955–72:** A mutiny by southern Sudanese soldiers in the Equatoria Corps in Torit in 1955, on the eve of Sudan's independence from Britain, marked the start of the first civil war.

**1972:** The Addis Ababa Peace Agreement was signed.

**1972–82:** Relative peace in Sudan.

**1983–2005:** The Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) war against northern Sudan.

**2005:** Signing of the CPA between Sudan and southern Sudan.

**January 2011:** Referendum on South Sudanese independence.

**July 2011:** Republic of South Sudan declares independence.

**September 2012:** Signing of the Nine Cooperation Agreements between Sudan and South Sudan.

**December 2013–August 2015:** Civil war breaks out in South Sudan between the SPLM/A and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in-Opposition (SPLM-IO).

**August 2015:** The ARCSS is signed.

**July 2016:** Civil war breaks out again in South Sudan.

**September 2018:** The R-ARCSS is signed.

# 1.1 WHY WOMEN'S INCLUSION IN PEACE PROCESSES MATTERS

Across the globe, women have largely been excluded from peace processes. Studies show that, between 1992 and 2011, only 4% of signatories to peace agreements and less than 10% of negotiators during peace talks were women.<sup>4</sup> Research also shows that, between 1990 and 2017, 'only 2% of mediators, 8% of negotiators, and 5% of witnesses and signatories in all major peace processes' were women.<sup>5</sup> Peace processes have largely involved the governments of respective countries and armed groups, with limited participation by women.<sup>6</sup> Since 1995, when the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was passed, the UN has made efforts to ensure an increase in women's participation in peace processes.<sup>7</sup> Among these efforts was the passing of the landmark UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on women, peace and security in October 2000. This resolution 'reaffirms the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peace-building, peacekeeping, humanitarian response and in post-conflict reconstruction'.<sup>8</sup> Despite this, women's active and influential participation in formal peace processes has remained limited.

International human rights law recognizes women's right to participate in public affairs, which should be understood to include national peace processes.<sup>9</sup> The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women in its general recommendation 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations, for instance, recommends that states parties 'reinforce and support women's formal and informal conflict prevention efforts' and 'ensure that women and civil society organizations focused on women's issues and representatives of civil society are included equally in all peace negotiations and post-conflict rebuilding and reconstruction efforts'.<sup>10</sup>

Research also shows that women's participation increases the likelihood of reaching an agreement, as well as the 'durability and the quality of peace'.<sup>11</sup> A study analysing 82 peace agreements in 42 armed conflicts between 1989 and 2011 found that 'peace agreements with female signatories are associated with durable peace... and demonstrate higher implementation rate for agreement provisions'.<sup>12</sup> In fact, when women participated in peace negotiations, agreements were 35% more likely to last at least 15 years.<sup>13</sup> This is because women were able to create linkages across different party lines.<sup>14</sup> Women also contributed to the inclusion of more provisions beyond power-sharing arrangements, to address areas such as social and economic recovery, which may contribute to more lasting peace.<sup>15</sup>

## 1.2 METHODOLOGY

### 1.2.1 Interviews

This report is based on qualitative research collected primarily through 25 in-depth, semi-structured interviews with women who have been involved in national peace processes in South Sudan. The interviews followed a guided set of questions, with room given for storytelling. In total, the researcher conducted:

- 21 one-on-one in-person interviews in Juba (South Sudan), Entebbe (Uganda), Nairobi and Kisumu (Kenya), and Khartoum (Sudan).
- Four phone interviews with women in Khartoum (Sudan), Entebbe (Uganda), Gambella (Ethiopia) and Houston (United States of America).

The researcher selected interviewees based on their visible and publicly known involvement in the relevant peace processes. These women suggested others who played roles in the peace processes, who were then approached for interviews using a snowball methodology. The women interviewed included women associated with armed groups; those affiliated with negotiating parties; professionals who contributed technical skills to peace processes; and those who had the ability to organize others by virtue of their positions in institutions, such as churches. The researcher worked to ensure that the women interviewed represented a diversity of affiliations and profiles.

Given the limited timeframe for research, most of the women interviewed were based in capital cities and had been involved in the national-level processes. There are some recent reports that have shed light on women's participation in local peace processes, such as Christian Aid's Report, *In it for the Long haul? Lessons on Peacebuilding in South Sudan*.<sup>16</sup> It is hoped that additional documentation of the role women play in more local peace processes will emerge.

To the extent possible, the interviews have been corroborated through desk research and triangulation with information from other interviewees, especially with regard to specific events or factual details. Furthermore, a validation workshop was held in April 2019 with 13 women peace actors in Juba, where chapters from the report were shared and the participants asked to corroborate the stories and add details. Unfortunately, the researcher was unable to obtain some of the position papers and statements referenced, particularly with regards to the CPA process. For a full list of the interviewees and individuals mentioned in the report including some biographical information, see **Annex 2**.

## 1.2.2 Analysis

Women in South Sudan informed peace processes and participated in decision making on a range of issues. They called for women's participation and representation in formal peace processes and bodies created by the peace agreements; inclusive and gender-sensitive governance and security arrangements; accountability for sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV); and the inclusion of stakeholders beyond warring parties in peace discussions. South Sudanese women's groups were also active in calling for dialogue between warring parties to secure peace. They participated in the peace processes as civil society leaders and as members of warring parties, and all came with diverse positions and opinions. Given this, this report does not attempt to describe the full range of issues on which they were engaged.

The analysis in this report uses the 'Broadening Participation' framework developed by Thania Paffenholz as part of a multi-year research project analysing 40 peace agreements.<sup>17</sup> The research project identified seven participation modalities<sup>18</sup> where civil society was present, both within or outside, formal peace negotiations. Using the same data, Paffenholz undertook further research, with a particular focus on women's participation and influence in the seven modalities (see **Box 2**). One of the key conclusions was that women's presence alone was not enough to create the conditions for more inclusive and sustainable peace. However, when women had influence over the negotiation process and beyond there were more peace agreements signed and effectively implemented.<sup>19</sup>

The influence of women's groups and networks is defined as 'their ability to push for their preferences before, during, and after the negotiation process'.<sup>20</sup> Pushing for preferences includes:

- Bringing issues onto the negotiation and implementation agenda;
- Putting issues into the text of the agreement;
- Participating in the implementation of an agreement; and
- Demanding the (re)starting of negotiations, and the signing of agreements.<sup>21</sup>

## **Box 2: Modalities of inclusion**

### **1 Direct representation at the negotiation table**

1A Inclusion within negotiation delegations

1B Enlarging the number of negotiation delegations (e.g. including a separate women's delegation)

### **2 Observer status**

### **3 Consultations**

3A Official consultations

3B Non- or semi-official consultations

3C Public consultations

### **4 Inclusive commissions**

4A Post-agreement commissions

4B Commissions preparing/conducting peace processes

4C Permanent commissions

### **5 High-level problem-solving workshops**

### **6 Public decision making (e.g. referenda)**

### **7 Mass action**

Source: T. Paffenholz et al. (2015). *Making Women Count – Not Just Counting Women: Assessing women's inclusion and influence on peace negotiations*. UN Women and the Inclusive Peace & Transition Initiative, p. 14.

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2017/5/making-women-count-not-just-counting-women>

Paffenholz's report also considered process factors that made it easier for women to meaningfully participate (see **Box 3**).

## **Box 3: Process factors that further contributed to women's ability to participate and influence peace processes**

- Inclusive selection criteria and procedures for groups included in a process;
- Decision making procedures that ensure women have influence;
- Coalition building among women to establish common issues;
- Transfer strategies that provide channels for women outside of the negotiation table to get their input into the peace process. (e.g. coordination between women representatives at the table and the women's groups);
- Inclusion-friendly mediators;
- Early inclusion of women in the peace process in part to help set a precedent.
- Support structures for women's inclusion prior to, during, and after negotiations.
- Women's inclusion in the monitoring of agreements' commitments;
- Funding for women's inclusion.

Source: T. Paffenholz et al. (2015). *Making Women Count – Not Just Counting Women: Assessing women's inclusion and influence on peace negotiations*. UN Women and the Inclusive Peace & Transition Initiative, pp. 8–9.

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2017/5/making-women-count-not-just-counting-women>

This research report analyses the modalities used at different stages of South Sudan's various peace processes, and the contextual and process factors that contributed to women's effective participation and influence. It assesses which modalities worked best, and the challenges that came with each.

The involvement of women is by no means a panacea. Some of the women who have participated in peace processes are conflict actors and members of warring parties. Women, like men, hold diverse political positions which may take precedence over any 'women's agenda'; their political stances may at times be contrary to the advancement of women or the good of society at large. As it tells the broad story of women's engagement in the CPA, ARCSS and R-ARCSS processes, the report acknowledges this tension by highlighting, for example, instances when women curtailed others' efforts to further women's rights due to their political or party allegiances. The report's premise is that women should participate in peace processes, but this should not be taken as an endorsement of any political/warring parties, individuals, substantive positions or strategies.

Mary fled from Malakal in South Sudan to Mangaten camp in Juba when the war broke out. Now she leads a household of 7 children by herself and fights for a better future. Photo: Robert Fogarty/Oxfam



# 2 THE COMPREHENSIVE PEACE AGREEMENT, 2005

## 2.1 WOMEN'S ROLES DURING THE SECOND SUDANESE CIVIL WAR

The Second Sudanese Civil War broke out in 1983. The action of Sudan's then-president, Jaffar Nimeiri—introducing Sharia law, dividing the country into three regions and disregarding the southern leadership that had been established by the Addis Ababa Peace accords—sparked a mutiny led by soldiers in the southern town of Bor.<sup>22</sup> The Khartoum government sent Dr John Garang de Mabior, then a Colonel in the Sudanese army, to mediate with the mutineers, but he joined them instead. Within two years, he was leading the insurgency. The mutineers called themselves The Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A).<sup>23</sup> The SPLM/A grew steadily, as many southerners joined as combatants and supporters.

South Sudanese women played key roles during the conflict—roles that are often overlooked and remain largely undocumented. They were combatants; care-givers to wounded soldiers; humanitarians; heads of household for the displaced and their families; and peace advocates who drew international attention to the impacts of the conflict and the need for peace.<sup>24</sup> They took on new and diverse roles that inspired and laid the groundwork for their participation in and influence on the CPA peace process and beyond.

During the civil war, Mrs Rebecca Nyandeng Garang was on the frontlines with her husband, Dr. Garang.<sup>25</sup> Returning to southern Sudan after four years in the USA, they travelled to the city of Bor in April 1983. She recounted that, on the night of 17 May 1983, her husband informed her that he was asked to lead the troops and that she should remain with their children as he took leadership of the insurgency. She told him: 'I am not remaining with the kids, I will go with you...If you want to leave me behind, here is a pistol, kill us first, then go on and lead the troops.' Dr Garang consented to her joining him. 'When we left with my husband, I was the only woman,' Mrs Garang said.<sup>26</sup>

When the SPLM/A started to grow, some displaced women and wives of SPLM/A soldiers joined Mrs Garang in Itang, Ethiopia. 'Some of the women started being trained. Then the Women's Battalion (Katiba Banat) came up. There was a group of about 90 women that came from Bor, Nuba mountains, Bahr-el-ghazal, Abyei and the Equatorias,' she recounted.<sup>27</sup> Those who joined the Women's Battalion were taken to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, before proceeding to Cuba for further military training. 'I went for [security] training. The majority of the big generals were also being trained. I was commissioned as first lieutenant when I came back. Many women were commissioned, but because they were looking after children, they were left in refugee camps. However, the Women's Battalion participated in the war, and they were on the front lines.'<sup>28</sup>

As many men joined the SPLM/A, many women automatically became the heads of their households, whether in refugee camps or in the diaspora. These women became the primary breadwinners and caregivers of their families. They established coping mechanisms, such as forming associations, to support each other.

In Itang in July 1985, six southern Sudanese women came together to form the New Sudan Women's Association (NSWA) with the objective of 'helping the needy by contributing food, running a clinic and a feeding centre for malnourished children.'<sup>29</sup> The NSWA was integrated into the SPLM/A in 1986;

new chapters of the association formed in other refugee camps, and became a norm in many of the SPLM/A-controlled areas within southern Sudan.<sup>30</sup> One of the women founders, Sitona Abdalla Osman—who later worked as a diplomat in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sudan and is currently with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, South Sudan—recounted how the associations provided support for women adjusting to refugee life and ensured that they were made aware of their rights.<sup>31</sup>

In Kenya, southern Sudanese women independently formed the Sudanese Women's Association in Nairobi (SWAN) in 1986. What started as a brainstorming meeting of 23 women in the house of Awut Deng Acuil became an association with over 800 members. According to Acuil, who was the Minister for Gender, Child and Social Welfare until August 2019 and is now South Sudan's Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, 'my children's constant questioning pushed me to do something about the conflict. They constantly asked me when we would go back home. I needed to do something to answer that question.'<sup>32</sup>

Pauline Riak, the current Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the University of Rumbek in South Sudan, was among the 23 women involved in the founding of SWAN, and in 2018 was also signatory to the R-ARCSS. 'When the war broke out against Khartoum, we [her and her husband] were on our way to Sudan, so we got stuck in Nairobi. We were initially very few, about 12–15 families in Kenya. But as the war intensified, women and children came to Kenya and our number increased to the thousands.'<sup>33</sup> The environment in Kenya at that time was not conducive for refugees, especially those from southern Sudan. 'There were no laws providing safety for foreigners. We were mishandled by security agencies because they thought that we had money,' Riak said. The women took on the role of household heads; earned a living by making groundnut paste, seat covers and beading; took English courses; and learned how to read and write.<sup>34</sup>

The associations in Kenya and Ethiopia supported the independence movement by providing food for the soldiers and sending medical items to those in need. Amer Manyok Deng-Yak, who was later a signatory in the ARCSS, remembers supporting the SPLM/A as a young girl in 1986: 'we went to...Dimmo refugee camp in Ethiopia as refugees...we would go to school under the trees and then come and help our mothers who were supporting the movement. When they needed to cook food like *kisra* to give the soldiers, we assisted. When they wanted to make peanut butter to supply the SPLA, we assisted... and in the process we got used to supporting the movement'.<sup>35</sup>

Beyond supporting soldiers, women worked to provide humanitarian assistance to displaced people and those living in SPLM/A-controlled areas, where food and basic services were minimal. 'We worked together to help our families inside the war zone. We bought whatever we could buy, put it into trucks and carried it into the war zone, wherever the war was taking place. We were always concerned about the displaced,' Riak explained.<sup>36</sup> The members of SWAN started meeting in houses every Saturday, and each woman brought whatever she could find for dressing wounds. The women eventually managed to fill a truck and, in 1988, Acuil and Riak travelled to Kapoeta in southern Sudan following the SPLM/A capture of the town.

'Our arrival was like salvation to the late Dr Madut [a doctor giving care to the SPLA soldiers]. There was fighting in Torit at that time and so many soldiers were coming to Kapoeta wounded. All Dr. Madut had was a knife that he sterilized by boiling in hot water. No soap, nothing to be put in the wounds. He removed a bullet and that was it. When we arrived, we arrived with everything. We took soap and [antiseptic]. The hospital [building] was there, but there were [no resources] there,' recounted Acuil.<sup>37</sup>

Southern Sudanese women also served as members of the 'fifth column' – a group of southern Sudanese living in Khartoum that shared information with the SPLM/A about planned attacks by the Sudanese government forces and offered guidance on the SPLA's own offensives.<sup>38</sup> Rose Pauline Lisok, the current Jubek State Minister for Gender, Child and Social Welfare was an SPLM member registered in the Kenyan chapter but living in Khartoum and a member of the fifth column. She

described the measures she took to stay safe given the illegality of what they were doing in Khartoum. 'Women were the carriers of the messages. I would use my job to share messages with the SPLM/A. When I was sent to an area to carry out my duties, I would carry a message for the SPLM/A leadership in the area,' she said.<sup>39</sup> To avoid being followed and caught, she and other women would sometimes adopt disguises like wigs.

The late Dr. Priscilla Nyannyang—a women's rights advocate who later served as the Deputy Minister of Gender, Child and Social Welfare, South Sudan (2011-13)—was described by colleagues as having been an active SPLM/A fifth column member. According to one close friend, 'Dr Priscilla would recruit women to inform the SPLM/A on what the Khartoum government was planning. She would take the young women for training on how to skilfully, secretly and effectively transfer sensitive information about planned attacks to the leadership of the SPLM/A. This country, especially the leadership of the SPLM/A, needs to honor Dr. Priscilla's efforts during the liberation struggle'.<sup>40</sup>

Southern Sudanese women also brought international attention to the conflict at public gatherings and in regional conferences. Acuil recounted how she travelled around the world to speak: 'I made my presentation [in Tanzania] and then was off on a flight to Senegal and then to Beijing to do more advocacy on the conflict in southern Sudan....It was a cause. The sacrifices we were making leaving our children behind to lobby around the globe, being constantly exhausted and falling sick, could not compare to the sacrifices made by soldiers who had no shoes, no clothes, and no shelter. We also had to do the same. We had to sacrifice'.<sup>41</sup>

The women interviewed for this report described how they became more aware of their strength as the civil war continued. They were speaking during association meetings and at international conferences. Those on the front lines gained confidence as equals to their male counterparts. Some women, especially the soldiers and members of the fifth column, were risking their lives in the same way that men were. With this growing consciousness of their contributions came an increased awareness of the absence of women in the formal negotiating delegations. So, women started demanding formal representation.

Women who interacted with men in leadership positions asked them to include women in their delegations. Mrs Rebecca Garang remembers her husband once responding, 'I am for women's involvement, but I can't go and tell their husbands to give me their women. The women need to come out'.<sup>42</sup>

The resignation of Ethiopian President Mengistu Haile Mariam on 22 May 1991<sup>43</sup> and the new government's decision to expel the SPLM/A from Ethiopia, which it had used as a key military base, coincided with a split in the SPLM/A between its chairperson, Dr Garang, and two of its top-ranking political-military commanders, Dr Riek Machar and Dr. Lam Akol.<sup>44</sup> This internal split, which triggered intense violence between southern Sudanese groups, spurred some women to organize as grassroots peace advocates, moving between the two sides and calling for reunification.

According to Mrs. Garang, some women 'formed organizations which employed a non-partisan approach...because they wanted to bring the two SPLM movements together. They were moving between the SPLM/A and Dr Riek and Dr. Lam's SPLM-Nasir movement, so that they would all come together'.<sup>45</sup>

The women in associations in Nairobi organized around resolving the split in the SPLM/A and stood together. Acuil recounted how women stood firm and resisted divisions among southern Sudanese people: 'When we went for functions, we greeted each other regardless of the split. For instance, for those men not greeting each other, we would tell our husbands, you stand here, I'm going across there to greet the husband of my sister'.<sup>46</sup> Women who were associated with the opposing sides due to their spouses or regional associations, continued to 'visit one another, maintain communication and

provide a forum to discuss issues that affected their communities, something no man was capable of.<sup>47</sup>

In 1997, Osman and some colleagues formed the New Sudan Women Federation (NSWF), a women's rights lobbying and advocacy organization working in areas controlled by the SPLM/A. The NSWF was cognizant that previous peace processes, such as the failed Abuja Process convened by Nigerian President Ibrahim Babangida between the Sudanese government (dominated by the National Islamic Front) and the SPLM in 1992–3, had no women present.<sup>48</sup>

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD),<sup>49</sup> had started conversations on reviving the peace talks between both warring parties in May 1998.<sup>50</sup> The women of the NSWF and SWAN were determined to be present in this peace process, and lobbied leaders in side meetings on the need for women's inclusion in the negotiating delegations.

## 2.2 WOMEN'S INCLUSION IN THE CPA NEGOTIATIONS

### 2.2.1 Direct representation

From the late 1990s, IGAD convened discussions in an attempt to find a peaceful solution to the conflict.<sup>51</sup> Suzanne Jambo – a trained lawyer then working for the UN was spotted by Dr Garang at a conference in Kampala, Uganda. He asked Mrs Garang to convince Jambo to join the SPLM/A.<sup>52</sup> 'He sent Mama Rebecca [Garang] with all her bodyguards to my office in Gigiri, Nairobi to convince me to join the SPLM/A,' Jambo recounted.<sup>53</sup> According to Mrs Garang, Dr Garang wanted Jambo involved as she was an educated woman who could speak about the issues and concerns of southern Sudanese women at an international level.<sup>54</sup> Jambo's first assignment was to organize the first SPLM Women's Conference in New Kush, Sudan. The conference brought together over 700 delegates<sup>55</sup> who agreed on a 25% affirmative action quota for women's representation. The 25% affirmative action quota had its basis in the first SPLM national convention in Chukudum, southern Sudan in 1994.<sup>56</sup> At Chukudum, it had been proposed that of the three county nominees to be appointed to the National Liberation Council that was to be established, one was to be a woman and separate 'women delegate' seats were also guaranteed in the National Liberation Council.<sup>57</sup> The women's conference in New Kush agreed to this quota and it became the basis for women calling for inclusion in the peace negotiations.<sup>58</sup> According to Jambo, when in November 1999 Dr Garang received an invitation from the IGAD secretariat to what was going to a rejuvenation of the peace talks on Sudan, he was asked to nominate ten delegates.

She received communication that she was the tenth SPLM/A member of the permanent delegation at the peace talks—and at the time the only woman.<sup>59</sup> Acuil also recalled being a part of the main delegation interfacing with the northern Sudanese delegation at a later stage in the peace negotiations.<sup>60</sup>

'While at the peace discussions, I brought in language on women's rights, and inequalities in how the north treated southerners, to the discussions. But it was not easy,'<sup>61</sup> recounted Jambo. However, she leveraged her relationship with Dr Garang to her advantage: 'the men in the SPLM did not listen to me because I was young and a woman. I would be shot down in plenary but I learned to schedule side meetings through Mama Rebecca [Garang] to speak to Dr John [Garang]. I would explain my views and frustrations to him, and once convinced, he would adopt my views, and let the delegation know. Once Dr John spoke, that was our position.'<sup>62</sup>

The New Sudanese Indigenous Network (NESI) and other civil society organizations (CSOs) also rallied behind Jambo, giving her a constituency. 'The civil society positions were more dynamic. I would make sure the positions had many signatures. The men in the delegation started to respect me as they could see I had a backing,' Jambo explained.<sup>63</sup> The positions of broader civil society groups did not discriminate between women and men and brought a new dimension of southern Sudanese civil society to the peace negotiations.

The IGAD-led discussions in 1999–2005 saw a steady increase in women's participation in the CPA peace process. The IGAD mediators created thematic working groups on power sharing, economic resources and security arrangements. The discussions in the thematic groups led to a series of protocols that together came to be known as the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). Jemma Nunu Kumba, currently the Minister for Gender, Child and Social Welfare, South Sudan and the Acting Secretary General of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement, was invited to be part of the thematic groups on the side of the SPLM/A. 'We were a technical committee – discussing our view points and proposals on the issues at hand and developing position papers. When the main negotiators came, they briefed us on the discussions with the northerners and we presented our positions to them. They in turn used these positions in the main negotiations,' recalls Kumba of her engagement.<sup>64</sup>

The first of the CPA protocols was signed on 20 July 2002 in Machakos, Kenya. In the opening of this thematic group's discussions on governance that led to the signing of the Machakos Protocol, Osman, who had been active in peace organizations throughout the process, was invited as part of the SPLM/A delegation but not as a main negotiator interfacing with the Sudan delegation. Other women who later joined the CPA process included Mary Apai, Abuk Payiti and Agnes Losuuba.<sup>65</sup> At this point, the women's priority was to be part of the negotiation team so as to bring their experiences to bear on the discussions. By sharing their opinions in feedback sessions with the delegates who were in the actual negotiations and in drafting the SPLM/A's positions, the women delegates determined that human rights concerns and gender issues should be considered.<sup>66</sup>

#### **Box 4: Timeline of the CPA**

- **20 July 2002:** The Machakos Protocol (Chapter I), signed in Machakos, Kenya. Agreement on broad principles of government and governance.
- **25 September 2003:** The Agreement on Security Arrangements (Chapter VI), signed in Naivasha, Kenya.
- **7 January 2004:** The Agreement on Wealth Sharing (Chapter III), signed in Naivasha, Kenya.
- **26 May 2004:** The Protocol on Power Sharing (Chapter II), the Protocol on the Resolution of the Conflict in Abyei Area (Chapter IV), and the Protocol on the Resolution of the Conflict in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile States (Chapter V), signed in Naivasha, Kenya.
- **30 October 2004:** The Permanent Ceasefire and Security Arrangements Implementation Modalities and Appendices (or Annexure I), signed in Naivasha, Kenya.
- **31 December 2004:** The Implementation Modalities and Global Implementation Matric and Appendices (Annexure II), signed in Naivasha, Kenya.
- **9 January 2005:** The final comprehensive agreement signed in Nairobi, Kenya, marking the commencement of implementation activities.

Source: Available at UN Mission in Sudan. (n.d.). *Comprehensive Peace Agreement*.

<https://unmis.unmissions.org/comprehensive-peace-agreement>

## 2.2.2 Consultations

Women representatives in the negotiating delegations held consultations with many women's organizations and networks in Kenya. These served as an effective avenue for the latter to understand what was happening in the peace process. Such consultations also provided an opportunity for women delegates to develop their own positions. Whenever there was a pause in the negotiations, the women in the delegations would gather a group for a briefing. For example, Kumba remembers engaging a group of women at the SWAN offices in Nairobi to debrief them on the discussions in Naivasha.<sup>67</sup> She and her colleagues then gathered their inputs on key areas such as wealth-sharing arrangements to have ready to share during the next round of CPA negotiations. Acuil also recalls conducting such consultations and briefings in the company of the late Dr. Samson Kwaje, a member of SPLM/A delegation and a frequent visitor to SWAN.<sup>68</sup> These consultations ensured that when the women representatives were speaking, they were speaking on behalf of a broader constituency of women.

For the southern Sudanese women in Khartoum, the Sudan Council of Churches (SCC) provided an umbrella under which consultations were conducted. A committee of legal and other technical experts including church leaders attended CPA discussions as observers and advisors. This committee included women like Rose Pauline Lisok, Joy Kwaje, the late Dr. Priscilla Nyannyang and others. 'They would attend the discussions, share progress with us... and consolidate our views as women,' explained Agnes Wasuk—who is the current Coordinator of the Women's Program at the South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC). 'The women were consulted through the church and civil society, and they asked for their inclusion in the process and for the inclusion of a quota for women's participation in the ensuing governance structures'.<sup>69</sup> Women civil society actors were able to meet in secret places, were consulted and felt that their opinions had been considered by the committee, who in turn relayed their wishes to the negotiating teams.

## 2.2.3 Mass action

### Campaigns

In London, southern Sudanese women whose husbands were involved in the war formed a small support group to discuss how to support each other as they navigated housing and asylum rules. Collectively meeting in different homes, including at the house of Angelina Teny—the current chairperson of the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) board of the R-ARCSS, a member of the SPLM/A-IO politburo and married to its current Chairperson Dr. Riek Machar.<sup>70</sup>

Many of the women and their communities had lost their livelihoods when oil was discovered in Unity State, so they started a campaign targeting international oil companies operating in Sudan, demanding that they ensure peace in southern Sudan before exploring oil in the country. This campaign garnered international attention, was taken up by big organizations and 'took a life of its own', according to Teny.<sup>71</sup>

The European Coalition on Oil in Sudan—made up of over 40 national and international organizations—created a set of benchmarks for oil exploration that took into consideration the impact on communities. Several important initiatives followed in the wake of the campaign, such as the publication of a Christian Aid report, *The Scorched Earth*.<sup>72</sup> This report argued that oil exploration was fuelling the conflict and warned of the impact that oil exploration had on the community.<sup>73</sup>

Southern Sudanese women living in Nairobi recall being part of another campaign launched against Canadian oil company Talisman Energy as a result of the report. Their argument was that the funds received from oil exploration in southern Sudan would be given to the government in Khartoum, who would in turn use the money to fund their war against the South.<sup>74</sup> Some Kenyan politicians in Nairobi joined this campaign.<sup>75</sup> As a result of this campaign, coupled with pressure from other parts of the

world including the United States,<sup>76</sup> Talisman Energy ended its four-year investment in Sudan in October 2002, selling 'its 25% stake in the Greater Nile Petroleum Operating Company for \$758 million.... [to] a unit of the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation of India',<sup>77</sup> and left Sudan.

## Protests

When Kofi Annan, then the UN Secretary-General, visited Kenya in 1998, IGAD mediators had planned to reconvene talks between the parties to the conflict in southern Sudan.<sup>78</sup> Southern Sudanese women, organized through their churches and associations, were determined that their demand for a peaceful solution would be heard by Annan. Dressed in black dresses and head wraps, typical mourning attire, they carried a coffin to the UN compound in Gigiri, Nairobi, where Annan was expected to deliver his address.<sup>79</sup> 'I made the coffin in my house and carried it with me to the UN headquarters,' said Lona James Elia – one of the SWAN members. This symbolized the hundreds of thousands of southern Sudanese who had lost their lives in the war. 'We had been waiting outside the UN compound for his [Annan's] motorcade to pass. As soon as we saw his motorcade, we started wailing to get his attention. One of us – Agnes Nyoka could cry so easily and wailed so loudly.'<sup>80</sup> Their protest caught the Secretary-General's attention. 'He was shocked. He kept repeating, "calm down, calm down".'<sup>81</sup> The women were given five minutes to deliver their message. According to Elia, Dr. Anne Itto was elected by other women to meet him because she was eloquent and well informed about the dangers of oil exploration in southern Sudan.

The statement she gave emphasized the need to pressure the parties to the conflict to find a peaceful solution by also illustrating the dire humanitarian situation for thousands of southern Sudanese.<sup>82</sup>

Elia believes that the protest helped galvanize the Secretary-General's support for a peaceful resolution. While there is no direct evidence of this, during his trip, Annan later referenced the conflict during his remarks in Kenya, where he reiterated his 'strong support for IGAD and for the peace initiative launched by [Kenyan] President Moi',<sup>83</sup> which was due to begin during the visit. He also urged the participants in the peace process to 'expedite their search for a comprehensive, peaceful settlement of the conflict.'<sup>84</sup> During his visit, the previously stalled flight approvals for the UN-led Operation Lifeline Sudan, which provided humanitarian assistance, were secured with the Khartoum government, efforts for which the Secretary-General publicly applauded the Sudanese government.<sup>85</sup> He emphasized that it was crucial for such humanitarian access to be maintained 'regardless of the outcome of the peace negotiations.'<sup>86</sup>

## 2.2.4 Inclusive commissions

Following the signing of the CPA in 2005, women affiliated with the SPLM/A were appointed to various commissions and entities to prepare for establishment of the new southern Sudanese semi-autonomous government.

For example, Awut Deng Acuil's engagement in the negotiating delegation led to her appointment as part of a delegation of ten southern Sudanese sent to Khartoum for a confidence-building initiative. There she was appointed to be part of the Constitutional Review Committee of Sudan where she ensured that the textual language 'He and she' was maintained in the different clauses of the Sudanese constitution, as opposed to a blanket gender-blind 'he'.<sup>87</sup> Teny was also invited as part of the initial advance team to Khartoum, and tasked to represent the SPLM/A in the Petroleum Commission, where she participated in discussions on the management of oil fields and the future of the communities in areas of oil extraction and exploration.<sup>88</sup> Kumba was then appointed as a Member of Parliament in the Sudan government where she in 2007 championed the founding of the Sudanese Women's Parliamentary Caucus and represented Sudan in the Pan-African Parliament.<sup>89</sup>

Acuil was soon after also appointed as part of the committee to draft the Interim Constitution of Southern Sudan, where she and other women including Grace Gatiro and Lucy Yaya, helped ensure

that the 25% quota for women's participation in the Executive—which had already been agreed at an earlier SPLM/A meeting—was enshrined in the Interim Constitution of Southern Sudan and that the Bill of Rights guaranteed equality for all.<sup>90</sup>

For others, like Nyandeng Malek—a civil society activist in Nairobi and a member of the SPLM/A, participating as a CSO member during the CPA negotiation process was 'eye-opening'.<sup>91</sup> After the CPA was signed and the constitution drafted, she worked to lobby male colleagues for positions for women.

'For the women such as Awut Deng Acuil and myself, because we were aware that [the] majority of our women [from the SPLM/A] knew about the 25% [quota] but did not know how to achieve it, we took it upon ourselves to lobby for its achievement. We started negotiating with the men, like Michael Makuei [part of the SPLM/A politburo]...First the state governors were appointed, and were accommodated in a compound in Juba. We would go each evening, Awut and I, to lobby, look for each of them and tell them, there is the 25% quota in the constitution. So, when they are forming their government, we want women in the executive.'<sup>92</sup>

Malek talked about the importance of women constantly reminding their colleagues: 'You know men [know] that there is [a requirement for 25% representation of women], but if there is nobody going after it, to make sure it is actually implemented, it is easily forgotten because they are not used to women coming to their mind when they are making any decisions. You really have to be present. We would go in the evenings to talk to them and remind them that there must be women.'<sup>93</sup>

By closely watching and understanding the politics of the appointments, Malek knew who to lobby, and was appointed deputy governor of Warrap State in 2007–9.<sup>94</sup> Malek subsequently stood for election in 2010 and was the first female elected state governor in South Sudan. Other notable female appointees in post-CPA South Sudan include: Jemma Nunu Kumba as first female governor of Western Equatoria state in 2008, Pauline Riak as the Chairperson of the Anti-Corruption Commission, Anna Kima as a member of the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission and Joy Kwaje Eluzai as the Chairperson of the Southern Sudan Human Rights Commission.

## 2.2.5 Public-decision making: referendum

The CPA provided for a referendum in which the people of southern Sudan would have an opportunity to decide whether they wanted an independent state or to remain part of Sudan. Jackline Nasiwa, a legal expert who had gained her degree in Uganda and Masters in the UK, was working in southern Sudan in 2011 when she was recruited as the personal secretary to the Chairperson of the Southern Sudan Referendum Bureau (SSRB).<sup>95</sup> Nasiwa led a campaign on women's right to vote, with the slogan, 'your vote, your voice,' jointly conducted with staff at the SSRB, a number of UN agencies, local and national CSOs. The referendum ran for a week in January 2011. Some women recall going door-to-door to mobilize people to vote, and ensuring that pregnant women, the elderly and those with disabilities would be the first to vote, allowing them to participate.<sup>96</sup> In the end, the vote was returned with 98.83% in favour of independence. Reportedly, 52% of voters were women.<sup>97</sup>

## 2.3 CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS TO WOMEN'S INCLUSION IN THE CPA NEGOTIATIONS

Women had to fight for their inclusion in the CPA negotiations. By doing so, they were attempting to change the status quo that had defined the public and political spheres as 'male spaces.' They encountered a number of challenges.

### 2.3.1 Patriarchal gender norms

Women had to overcome cultural barriers to participate in the political sphere; whenever they did, it was in opposition to traditional gender roles. In patriarchal southern Sudanese society, women were limited to the private sphere, not to be seen engaging in the public life.<sup>98</sup>

The women who were eventually included in the SPLM/A negotiating team did not fully overcome these unequal gender relations. Though they attended peace discussions, they were rarely invited to the negotiation table. 'It was always the same faces [referring to her male colleagues] that would be at the table,'<sup>99</sup> lamented Osman.

Although they were in principle equal members of the negotiating team, in practice women were never treated as such.<sup>100</sup> Osman remembers when she expressed her frustration that it was always the same men invited to sit at the negotiation table on behalf of her delegation, saying 'if you don't die, no one will [have space to] come in to take a seat at the table. Why do you think it's only you who can speak on the issues of the south Sudanese?'<sup>101</sup> She further complained that male colleagues did not take women or gender issues seriously: 'whenever we said anything on gender, they would say, "OK, OK, OK... we know, we know. We will incorporate it", but they would not. Some of them took us seriously but others took us as a joke.'<sup>102</sup>

Kumba became all too familiar with derogatory insults directed at her in the course of her leadership journey from the CPA process to her present leadership positions. 'We are living in a patriarchal society where women are looked at as un-equals. People will try to frustrate you as much as possible. They will call you names – prostitute, loose woman, sometimes you are not given credit for your own merit and get accused of things you have not done – just because you are a leader,' Kumba explained.<sup>103</sup> But for her, learning to fight back became and continues to be her chosen approach. 'I will not succumb to such intimidation by getting discouraged and sitting back. When I have time to talk, I talk and challenge it all because I know that is not who I am or what I do. I also fight back by performing and delivering in my responsibilities.'<sup>104</sup>

Malek also reports that she repeatedly had to face questions such as, 'how can you expect a woman to lead Warrap State?'<sup>105</sup> This statement challenged her ability to lead a state that was perceived to be the most conflict-wrought across southern Sudan and revealed a perception that it required male leadership to effectively steer it. However, Malek was confident that it was her human right to participate in matters affecting governance and society and was cognizant of the precedence she was setting of women in political leadership spaces.

### 2.3.2 Insecurity

In Khartoum especially, the southern Sudanese women leaders and fifth column members understood that what they were doing was considered illegal, as they were living under the same government against which they were organizing. It was extremely risky to participate in marches and campaigns,

so they held their meetings in secret places, wore wigs and changed outfits to protests in order to confuse the security apparatus that was monitoring them. 'I was questioned and interrogated many times. I constantly watched my back. And my people in turn were scared of me [to be associated with her lest they become targets too],' recalls Lisok. Her family was not spared the side effects of her engagement: 'my parents were frightened. People would come and tell them "your daughter is going to be arrested and killed."' When I came home, people would not come visit when I was present; they would only visit when I was at work.'<sup>106</sup>

## 2.4 IMPACT OF THE VARIOUS MODALITIES

Southern Sudanese women were included and participated in the CPA negotiations through direct representation, consultations, mass action, inclusive commissions and public decision making.

However, their influence on the negotiating delegations was minimal. The SPLM/A's inclusion of women in its official delegation to the formal negotiations was perceived as a 'token measure to gratify the demands of effective track-two diplomacy by women's groups'.<sup>107</sup> According to Itto, 'the SPLM/A leadership nominated a handful of women leaders as members of the delegation to Machakos and subsequent rounds of negotiations...they were expected to contribute to the overall party position which was gender-blind to begin with; and they were always a minority, ill-prepared for debates with seasoned politicians who ridiculed or intimidated anyone who dared to spend much time on gender issues'.<sup>108</sup>

Unfortunately, most women's groups did not keep records of the statements and position papers they delivered, making it hard to analyse their content or track the impact of their contributions on the final texts of the CPA. However, women's participation in the SPLM/A, their presence during negotiations and engagements with leading male politicians led to some being given positions in post-agreement bodies, in which they had opportunities to lobby for gender issues, for example the inclusion of the 25% quota for women in South Sudan's post-CPA constitution.

The independence referendum proved to be a successful modality of inclusion through which the women of South Sudan were the majority of voters, and their participation proved critical for the secession of South Sudan from Sudan, which required at least a 60% turn-out of voters.<sup>109</sup> Southern Sudanese women in the diaspora were also effective in ensuring that the war in Sudan was not forgotten. Their mass action and mobilization put the conflict on the world's radar, contributed to the eventual signing of an agreement, and the holding to account of foreign oil companies that were benefitting from the war.

Another important impact was the precedent set, which helped pave the way for women's participation in future peace processes. The active role of southern Sudanese women during the CPA process influenced a younger generation. For example, Merekaje Lorna—a civil society activist who became engaged in the ARCSS process years later—and Emmily Koiti—a civil society activist who was a signatory in the most recent R-ARCSS peace agreement—both reported being inspired by their mothers' involvement in the peace movement. Merekaje's mother, Mama Keziah, was a firm supporter of the SPLM/A and took her daughter along to women's meetings and other political engagements including the historic SPLM/A Chukudum Conference of 1994.<sup>110</sup> Merekaje also took on secretarial work at the SWAN centre in Nairobi.<sup>111</sup> Koiti, on the other hand, learned through her mother's absence. Her single mother joined the SPLM/A movement, and this left Koiti with the responsibility of taking care of her siblings. The rationale for a mother's absence at such a time was well grasped by Koiti at a young age and served as important inspiration for her active engagement in the R-ARCSS process.<sup>112</sup>



Women in South Sudan are raising their voices to demand their rights. Photo: Bullen Chol/Oxfam.

In summary, the gains of women's engagement in the CPA negotiations can be listed as:

1. Achieving the 25% affirmative action quota for women in the Executive in the SPLM Charter (1994), the basis for its later inclusion in the 2005 Interim Constitution of Southern Sudan;
2. Increasing international awareness of the conflict in Sudan;
3. Drawing the world's attention to the dangerous effects of oil exploration on southern Sudanese communities, and how it was further fuelling the conflict in the country; and
4. Securing appointments for women in the new autonomous government for southern Sudan, including the deputy governorship of Warrap State (2005), the governorship of Western Equatoria State (2008), and as participants in the post-CPA negotiations with Khartoum.

# 3 WOMEN IN THE ARCSS NEGOTIATIONS, 2014–15

## 3.1 WOMEN'S ROLES DURING THE SOUTH SUDANESE CIVIL WAR, 2014–15

Following South Sudan's independence in 2011, the SPLM became the ruling party in South Sudan, with Salva Kiir as President and Riek Machar as Vice President. Over time, it became clear that divisions among South Sudanese people that had existed prior to independence remained and had festered. Some women started to notice divisive rhetoric among the SPLM leadership in particular, and attempted to avert conflict.

For example, Zeinab Yassin, then an independent SPLM/A member and currently the Chairperson of the South Sudan Women's General Association (SSWGA), reported that, when President Kiir dismissed Machar from his position in July 2013, she tried to intervene in plans to hold a SPLM convention in December 2013. 'I looked for Pagan Amum [one of the high-ranking members of the SPLM politburo]. I told him they needed to postpone the SPLM Convention. [I said] "it is not a good time to have it. There is so much tension."<sup>113</sup> Yassin predicted that holding the convention at a period of such heightened tension and disagreement among the political elites would be catastrophic.

Emmily Koiti, then a member of the Equatoria Students Association had also been closely following developments in April-July 2013 and with her association sought the audience of key leaders. 'There were so many rumors going around before the president could reshuffle the cabinet. We met the then Speaker of Parliament, Wani Iga; Anne Itto, the then Deputy Secretary General of the SPLM; Pagan Amum and Dr. Riek Machar, two leaders who were likely to contend the presidential seat,' Koiti explained.<sup>114</sup> The young people had heard that there were disagreements on whether to hold election primaries and that some politicians had personal disagreements. Koiti and her team met the leaders to hear their accounts and to encourage them to amicably resolve their differences and avoid any escalation to conflict.<sup>115</sup>

These efforts failed and conflict broke out on 15 December 2013 between soldiers loyal to President Salva Kiir and those loyal to Dr. Machar.<sup>116</sup> Despite the conflict being sparked by political disagreements, the elites and their supporters quickly drew on existing ethnic allegiances and fanned ethnic animosities, mainly between the Dinka and Nuer ethnic groups.<sup>117</sup>

On 17 December, a few days after the conflict broke out, women from different multi-denominational member churches of the SSCC met at St Joseph's church in Juba.<sup>118</sup> 'We were determined that we would not let this [war] happen again. We were tired. The bullets were still being shot. But we met. We came up with a statement denouncing the conflict and asking the leaders to stop because we have lost many lives,'<sup>119</sup> explained Agnes Wasuk, the National Coordinator of the Women's Program at the SSCC.

In January 2014, IGAD began negotiations in Addis Ababa on the cessation of hostilities between the Government of South Sudan (SPLM - in government) led by President Kiir, and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement In Opposition (SPLM-IO) led by Dr Riek Machar.

Of the 10-member delegation invited to participate from each side in the January 2014 cessation of hostilities discussion, the SPLM/A-IO had three women while the SPLM/A in government had none.<sup>120</sup>

Apuk Mayen, who had done some work with the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue in Nairobi, gathered 40 women from both sides of the conflict for a three-day workshop during which they asked, 'what are

the bare minimums that we can agree on as women of South Sudan from the different parties to the conflict, that we can present to the warring parties as they gather in Addis Ababa?’<sup>121</sup> The group agreed on a position, the most essential demand being for the cessation of hostilities. They agreed not to ‘name’ themselves to avoid politicizing the group, and came up with a list of ten women to send to Addis Ababa to advocate on the side lines of the IGAD-led discussions.

**Box 5: Excerpt from Taskforce on the Engagement of Women Statement**

*The international community support the cessation of hostilities agreement. ‘Despite the fact that women contributed in many ways throughout the war and also in bringing peace to our countries during the comprehensive peace negotiations and the peaceful referendum, they continue to be poorly represented in formal peace processes. We decry the exclusive nature of the negotiations, in particular the absence of key stakeholders, especially women. We affirm the right of and need for women to be included in, consulted about, and informed of decision-making and peace processes that impact our lives. Women’s voices must inform the substance of policies intended to bring peace.’*

Source: Taskforce for the Engagement of Women in Sudan and South Sudan. (2014). *Statements and Recommendations*. [https://www.inclusivesecurity.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Taskforce-Position-Paper\\_Addis-2014.pdf](https://www.inclusivesecurity.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Taskforce-Position-Paper_Addis-2014.pdf)

Prior to South Sudan’s declaration of independence, a group of peacebuilders from northern and southern Sudan known as the ‘Taskforce for the Engagement of Women in Sudan and South Sudan’ (hereafter referred to as ‘the Taskforce’), had been formed. It comprised 19 women and one man, who wanted to ensure the inclusive implementation of the nine Cooperation Agreements between both countries.<sup>122</sup> The Taskforce was scheduled to be in Addis Ababa in January 2014 to meet on the side lines of the annual African Union (AU) Summit. When the conflict erupted, all 20 members of the Taskforce had to quickly transform into an advocacy entity for South Sudanese instead of bi-national issues, pushing for women’s inclusion in South Sudan’s national peace process to end the new war.<sup>123</sup>

In Nairobi, the Women Cry for Peace Coalition, comprised of women in civil society and those associated with both sides of the conflict, was formed in December 2013. They agreed to join the call for an end to the war and to send a group of women to Addis Ababa. In Kampala, Isis-Women’s International Cross-Cultural Exchange (Isis-WICCE) had also gathered some South Sudanese women for a conference to understand what their response was to the outbreak of conflict. The women who had been consulted in Uganda were financially and technically supported to travel to Addis Ababa to lobby for their inclusion and participation in the peace talks.<sup>124</sup>

Broader civil society also engaged. In February 2014, more than 60 civil society representatives, over a third of whom were women, attended a conference in Nairobi.<sup>125</sup> The meeting resulted in the founding of Citizens for Peace and Justice (CPJ), a civil society network that took on ensuring inclusivity of the peace process as a key objective.

Some women representatives of CSOs used their own means to get to Addis Ababa, willing and able to cover their own expenses, while others received support from international actors.<sup>126</sup> The actual and perceived access to resources to engage with the talks was a cause of discord between some groups. While some women’s groups had scheduled meetings with dignitaries in the AU or international embassies, others were uncertain of how to gain access to decision makers.<sup>127</sup> Many of those using their own resources grew frustrated at the lack of access and progress, and their dwindling personal resources, leaving Addis Ababa quickly.

However, those supported by international organizations like Inclusive Security, Isis-WICCE and UN Women, were able to stay on longer.

The Taskforce wrote numerous statements addressed to the mediators, IGAD and the AU on the need to include women. They demanded that:

- A senior gender advisor be appointed to advise the IGAD Special Envoys and work closely with civil society;
- Women and CSOs be included in peace discussions; and
- Other groups employed ‘guerrilla advocacy’ tactics. The ten women that were sent following the group meeting at the Center for Humanitarian Dialogue in Nairobi travelled to Addis Ababa and arrived a few days before the signing of the ceasefire. ‘We did not know who was where. We just showed up at the venue and ambushed the warring parties. We quickly divided ourselves, went to the warring parties and sought to understand their positions, and encourage them to find a compromise. It was very much guerrilla advocacy,’ remembers Mayen.<sup>128</sup>

#### **Box 6: Timeline of the ARCSS**

- **9 July 2011:** Independence of South Sudan.
- **December 2013:** Outbreak of civil war in South Sudan.
- **23 January 2014:** Cessation of Hostilities Agreement.
- **9 May 2014:** Agreement to Resolve the Crisis in South Sudan.
- **1 February 2015:** Areas of Agreement on the Establishment of the Transitional Government of National Unity in the Republic of South Sudan.
- **17 August 2015:** ARCSS signed in Addis Ababa.
- **26 August 2015:** ARCSS signed in Juba.
- **10 September 2015:** ARCSS ratified by the South Sudan National Legislative Assembly.
- **29 April 2016:** Formation of a Transitional Government of National Unity (TGoNU). Machar returns to South Sudan, after fleeing following the outbreak of the civil war.

Source: C. Hazvinei Vhumbunu. (2019). *Reviving peace in South Sudan through the Revitalised Peace Agreement*. African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes. <https://www.accord.org.za/conflict-trends/reviving-peace-in-south-sudan-through-the-revitalised-peace-agreement/>

## 3.2 WOMEN’S INCLUSION IN THE ARCSS NEGOTIATIONS

### 3.2.1 Observer status

At the start of the discussions on the cessation of hostilities in January 2014, IGAD—the mediating body—was reluctant to include women representatives. A number of the women who were present in Addis Ababa felt this was driven by the view that only the warring parties (whose leadership was predominantly male) needed to be engaged.<sup>129</sup> The women who were able to stay in Addis Ababa longer to ensure women’s representation and participation. ‘We drafted a letter to Ambassador Seyoum Mesfin, the Chairperson of the IGAD Special Envoys [the chief mediator] to South Sudan, expressing a desire to be engaged in the peace talks,’ Amer Manyok Deng-Yak said.<sup>130</sup> Other women leaders in South Sudan including independent women peace activists, women from CSOs, faith-based organizations, women leaders from national and state legislative assemblies, institutions of learning and the private sector were supported by UN Women to develop a strategy document which amongst other things called for ‘South Sudanese women to be granted official observer status in the ongoing peace talks.’<sup>131</sup>

Recognizing that achieving inclusion would require collective effort across groups, women from five different networks that were present in Addis Ababa organized under the banner South Sudan Women Advocacy for Peace (SSWAP) to ‘respond to the inadequate representation of women in the

stakeholders list of the peace dialogue.<sup>132</sup> This group wrote to General Lazarus Sumbeiywo, one of the Special Envoys in the mediation team, on 12 June 2014 requesting for IGAD to facilitate a women's meeting.<sup>133</sup> Members of this coalition who signed this letter included Maria Gideon Gakmar, Mary Akech Bior, Nyalel John Chuol, Aguil Deng, Mary Boyoi and Amer Manyok Deng-Yak.<sup>134</sup> This request was followed by a separate letter to Chief Mediator Ambassador Mesfin on 14 June 2014 where the women demanded for 'proportional and equitable participation of women in the peace process ... [and] that each of the stakeholder group include at least 35% women.'<sup>135</sup>

IGAD responded to the pressure for women's inclusion by tasking the women to return as a single bloc. In a letter on 20 June 2014, Ambassador Mesfin wrote to the South Sudan Women Advocacy for Peace:

'Reference is made to several requests received since January 2014, up to date by the IGAD mediation from different South Sudan Women's Associations to participate as a bloc in the IGAD led South Sudan dialogue...In acknowledging the need for the inclusion of women in the process, the mediation has made several efforts to remind the current six South Sudan stakeholders to include women in their delegations to address short comings and in appreciation of the fact that women are both actors and victims in the ongoing conflict. . . .However . . .women's representation is still very low and in some cases absent. In order to address this, the mediation has no objection to the consideration by the six participating stakeholders, of women bloc participation as a stakeholder.'<sup>136</sup>

In an effort to ensure inclusivity and diversity of the women representatives to the bloc, Ambassador Mesfin proposed a convening with all women's associations from both inside and outside South Sudan for a women representative forum, to facilitate the election of the Women's Bloc representatives to the South Sudan dialogue.<sup>137</sup> According to Deng-Yak, this women's representative forum meeting did not take place but rather, suggests that they were tasked with getting recommendations for women representatives from the various stakeholder groups.<sup>138</sup>

Some women's groups and leaders were at first unsure of this newly formed group of women, so securing the endorsement and buy-in of existing groups was difficult.<sup>139</sup> One of the reasons for suspicion was the view that they were not sufficiently independent of the warring parties.<sup>140</sup> However, Deng-Yak and others in SSWAP were not deterred by this and sought recommendations from different stakeholder groups already participating in the peace process which, according to her, were relayed to IGAD. By August 2014, SSWAP members received communication from the IGAD mediation to participate as a bloc in the peace process.<sup>141</sup> The SSWAP women members had pushed heavily to join the talks as delegates but when they arrived at the peace dialogue, they found they were joining as observers and came to be known as the Women's Bloc.<sup>142</sup> They had the opportunity to listen to the negotiations, but not the opportunity to engage in the formal discussions.

The main strategy of engagement for the Women's Bloc was to speak with members of the government and opposition delegations; ambassadors; and representatives of international organizations, including the IGAD mediators. According to Deng-Yak, they faced accusations of being spies of the government and opposition alike, as they were seen engaging with both parties.<sup>143</sup> But she explained that this was a deliberate part of their strategy: the Women's Bloc wanted to show their independence through these simultaneous interactions with all parties.

## 3.2.2 Direct representation

### As civil society

Women in civil society groups noted how few women were present in the negotiating teams of the warring parties and called for more women's representation. A statement by the Taskforce on the Engagement of Women in January 2014 reinforced this demand: '*We call upon the Parties to include a minimum of 35% women as negotiators in each negotiating team.*'<sup>144</sup>

With no initial representation of women as independent stakeholders in the peace process, women attended as civil society representatives. For example, members of the CPJ Secretariat, including Merekaje Lorna and Lona James Elia drafted a letter to IGAD on 7 May 2014 requesting their inclusion and committing to send a 14-member team.<sup>145</sup> IGAD responded to their letter on 17 May 2014 granting the CPJ accreditation.<sup>146</sup> CPJ therefore sent a gender-balanced delegation to IGAD's Civil Society Symposium in June 2014, which was intended as a discussion around consolidating and streamlining civil society representation in the ongoing peace talks. The Civil Society Alliance—another alliance of CSOs from South Sudan—also sent delegates to the Symposium.

The Symposium was marred by disagreements between civil society groups, but eventually a civil society delegation was determined.<sup>147</sup> The Civil Society Alliance had two women representatives—Alokiir Malual and Hellen Killa—out of seven members; of CPJ's four members, two were women—Rita Lopidia and Merekaje Lorna; and they were later joined by civil society representatives from diaspora of which two out of seven were women—Luris Mula and Sandra Bona Malual.<sup>148</sup> Thus, six women, along with twelve male civil society colleagues, were accredited as civil society delegates at the negotiation table by June 2014.

When the peace negotiations moved to Bahir Dar, Ethiopia in September 2014, the Women's Bloc members were able to find opportunity to speak within working committees created by IGAD.<sup>149</sup> This made it possible to engage and contribute to the discussion though their influence in such spaces was still minimal. When the ARCSS was signed in August 2015, Alokiir Malual was the signatory on behalf of the Civil Society Alliance, and Amer Manyok Deng-Yak signed for the Women's Bloc.<sup>150</sup>

### **As parties**

At the start of the ARCSS negotiations in Addis Ababa in January 2014, the SPLM/A and SPLM/A-IO were invited to bring ten delegates each.<sup>151</sup> SPLM/A's delegation included no women; the SPLM/A-IO delegation included three women who were members of the national parliament in Juba—Bangot Amum, Sophia Pal and Sarah Nyanath.<sup>152</sup> Sarah Nyanath, who was at that time the Minister of Social Development in Upper Nile state mentioned that 'it did make a difference if women were present, [as] they had different priorities than men, such as protecting women and children during conflicts.'<sup>153</sup> In February 2014, Angelina Teny, following the SPLM/A-IO chairperson's insistence that she join the negotiating team, joined the SPLM/A-IO delegation. 'You must go and support the team. There is nothing much you can do here,' she recalls Dr Riek telling her in response to her concern about leaving South Sudan.<sup>154</sup>

Women members of the SPLM/A also recognized the limited number of women in the delegations, especially given that there were women in the SPLM/A-IO delegation. Rose Lisok was among a group of SPLM/A women members who travelled to Addis Ababa to lobby for the inclusion of women in the peace process. Lisok remembers how they lobbied the Government of South Sudan's acting lead negotiator and Minister of Information Michael Makuei to include women in the negotiating team: 'We told him it was shameful for the SPLM/A-IO to have women in their delegation while the government did not have any.'<sup>155</sup> The women supported their demands by drawing upon the Transitional Constitution of South Sudan,<sup>156</sup> particularly Article 16—which promotes women's participation in public life and their representation in the legislative and executive organs by at least twenty-five per cent as an affirmative action to redress imbalances created by history, customs, and tradition<sup>157</sup> and UNSCR 1325. This pressure contributed to Awut Deng Acuil, Beatrice Aber and Mary Nyaulang being included as part of the SPLM/A delegation when the negotiations resumed.<sup>158</sup>

This meant that six women participated at the negotiation table as part of civil society, three as part of the SPLM/A, and three as part of the SPLM/A-IO.

### 3.2.3 Consultations

The Women's Monthly Forum on the Constitutional Review Process, a civil society-led initiative in Juba, was setup in 2011 following South Sudan's declaration of independence. It had the aim of collecting women's views to input into the constitutional review process.<sup>159</sup> 'When the 2013 crisis broke out, South Sudanese women started asking "what do we have to do?" Some of the women came and asked me, and I told them we need to continue with the forum, but this time it has to be on the peace process. Because we cannot do anything without peace regardless of whether you are civil society, or from a political party,' remembered Nasiwa, then the Program Specialist at the Public Interest and Policy Group, which was supporting South Sudanese women's engagement in the constitutional review process.<sup>160</sup> The Forum then transitioned to become the Women's Monthly Forum on Peace and Political Processes in South Sudan. It included women from all walks of life.<sup>161</sup>

The Women's Monthly Forum participants did not travel to the talks in Addis Ababa, but lobbied at the local and national levels within South Sudan.<sup>162</sup> They issued a number of statements condemning the fighting and the violations of the January 2014 cessation of hostilities agreement, and they emphasized the need to include women in the peace process.<sup>163</sup> They also informed women across South Sudan about what was happening at the talks. They travelled to seven of the country's ten former states, collated the views from the grassroots, and used them to develop statements that were shared in press conferences or through emails to the diplomatic community.<sup>164</sup> Initially, there was a link between the women civil society delegates and the Women's Monthly Forum: whenever civil society delegates, such as Merekaje, visited from Addis Ababa, the Forum would invite them to speak. 'If we knew this month they were going to discuss governance issues in Addis, we would look at regional comparisons—for example on security sector reform or on transitional justice—we would ask how has it come up in different countries, how have women participated in the issues at hand such as transitional justice concerns. We would turn them into the Forum's next discussion topic and then come up with statements, open letters and recommendations for publication and release,' Nasiwa said.<sup>165</sup> However, later, this link was broken due to the fast pace of the peace process. By the time the Forum had met to consult on a set of issues, the discussions in Addis Ababa had already shifted to the next topic of discussion.<sup>166</sup>

### 3.2.4 Inclusive commissions

Following the signing of the ARCSS, various committees and institutions were to be established, comprised of members from different political parties and stakeholder groups. Given that women had secured signatory status in the ARCSS, they were considered a stakeholder group, and the ARCSS therefore provided for participation of a woman's representative in some of these key committees. For instance, the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JMEC), which was mandated to monitor implementation of the ARCSS, had one designated Women's Bloc member out of 32 members. The Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) board, mandated to review and spearhead security sector reform, had one designated Women's Bloc representative out of 20 members and the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism (CTSAMM), tasked with monitoring ceasefire violations, had one Women's Bloc seat out of 21 seats. Other institutions like the National Constitutional Amendment Committee, mandated with the review of key laws, had no designated women's representative out of the eight members.<sup>167</sup>

When it came to actual implementation and set up of these institutions, of the 32 members appointed to JMEC, four were women: a Women's Bloc representative, Amer Deng-Yak; a youth representative, Emmily Koiti; Alokiir Malual from the Civil Society Alliance and Awut Deng Acuil from the SPLM/A.<sup>168</sup> In the SDSR Board, set up during the ARCSS, there were four women members present out of 20 members, Angelina Teny, one of the female members was made chairperson of the board.<sup>169</sup>

## 3.2.5 Other strategies

During the ARCSS talks, women civil society delegates and those in political parties needed to employ different strategies to have their voices heard.

### **Ensuring that women’s rights and concerns were embedded in wider discussions**

Women civil society delegates spent evenings working on position papers that they distributed to the warring parties, raising civil society demands that they ensured incorporated gender-sensitive language. In Addis Ababa, Merekaje and Lopidia became the ‘pen holders’ for civil society. ‘We did a lot of the writing so were able to include “without prejudice to gender” as a clause in provisions entailing participation or service delivery,’ Merekaje recalled.<sup>170</sup> Though this language was eventually removed from the text of the agreement,<sup>171</sup> language such as ‘inclusivity and national diversity of the people of South Sudan’ was included in the text of the agreement, as noted in Article 13(7).<sup>172</sup> Lopidia had worked on women’s issues previously, and thus focused on gender-sensitive language in the documents. ‘We also pushed for the inclusion of sexual and gender-based violence as a crime to be prosecuted by the Hybrid Court for South Sudan [a court to be set up by the African Union to achieve accountability and justice for victims of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in South Sudan]. This was a huge accomplishment,’ Lopidia said.<sup>173</sup>

### **Advocating within their networks**

Focusing on the strengths of the networks they belonged to, some of the women in CSOs partnered with international and regional organizations and networks—such as Cordaid, UN Women, the Young Women’s Christian Association, Isis-WICCE, Inclusive Security and Oxfam—through which they gained greater access to decision makers.

The women attended formal meetings in which they would clearly articulate their concerns and needs; in time, the international actors would seek them out for their views on the issues at hand, such as accountability for crimes and punitive measures for non-compliance with the peace agreement.<sup>174</sup>

### **Having others speak on their behalf**

The women in CSOs knew that, at times, they needed allies to champion their issues, including male colleagues and the international diplomatic community. For instance, the Troika Special Envoys—the special envoys of the United States, the United Kingdom and Norway, who were focused on resolving the conflict in South Sudan—were very supportive of women’s voices.<sup>175</sup> For more sensitive cases or demands, for which some women feared being perceived as whistle-blowers or facing repercussions on their return to Juba, they would lobby international partners to raise these issues. Women also worked with male allies on gender issues, such as Beny Gideon Mabior, a member of the CPJ, who was described by colleagues as being vocal on women’s issues and concerns.<sup>176</sup>

## 3.3 CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS TO WOMEN'S INCLUSION IN ARCSS NEGOTIATIONS

### 3.3.1 Mediation and mediation style

Women activists and groups faced opposition to their participation in the peace process from some mediators and warring parties.<sup>177</sup> The IGAD mediation team was entirely male, with Ambassador Seyoum Mesfin (of Ethiopia) as the lead Special Envoy and chief mediator, and two deputy Special Envoys, General Mohamed Ahmed El-Dabi (Sudan) and General Lazaro Sumbeiywo (Kenya)—all of whom had military backgrounds.<sup>178</sup> This male-dominance was perceived to be a reason for the opposition from the mediation for women's engagement in the process.

Recalling one of the many letters women's groups wrote to the envoys on women's inclusion, Deng-Yak recounts, 'We drafted a letter to Ambassador Seyoum Mesfin...expressing a desire to be engaged in the peace talks, but our letter was rejected. We didn't hear back.'<sup>179</sup> This perceived opposition from the mediation led to one woman activist resorting to an unorthodox approach, 'She locked up one of the IGAD secretariat staff and threatened to harm her if the Special Envoys did not provide a guarantee of women's inclusion in the process.'<sup>180</sup> Though this act had stern consequences, it was one of the acts that contributed to the pressure that eventually led to the acceptance of the Women's Bloc in the negotiations.<sup>181</sup>

The mediation structure had initially focused on just the warring parties—who were predominantly men—as opposed to including other stakeholders such as civil society and faith-based groups. This meant that women were largely excluded from the pre-negotiation discussions which set the parameters for future negotiations.<sup>182</sup> 'Participation in the actual peace talks was contingent on the agenda. While in some instances all the stakeholders were invited to participate in the plenary, in others cases most of the stakeholders' participation was reduced to consultation or observer status'.<sup>183</sup> Lopidia lamented that the mediation was so restricted such that even CSO activists who were full delegates sometimes became observers and were not permitted to engage in plenary sessions.<sup>184</sup> This could be one reason for the limited inclusion of women's rights and concerns in the final text of the agreement.

### 3.3.2 Overcoming personal trauma

The pain of losing loved ones during the conflict at times hindered the effective collaboration of women across the warring parties and within civil society. During the first meeting hosted by the group of young women at the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, a few days after the outbreak of fighting in December 2013, tensions were high. 'The pain was fresh, the trauma was fresh and everybody was experiencing it differently. . .there was a lot of defensiveness—yet we all had to work together for a common cause of peace,' Mayen recalls.<sup>185</sup> In the end, they agreed on a resolution whose main call was for a cessation of hostilities.

In the first meeting of the Taskforce in February 2014, Mayen recalls how there were strong suspicions among the group of women, despite the fact that they had previously worked together. She recalls participants lamenting the loss of loved ones.<sup>186</sup> The Taskforce comprised women from different communities, all of whom had been affected by the conflict in one way or another. In spite of their tribal, religious, professional differences, which were being exacerbated by the conflict, the women of the Taskforce had to work through that pain as they worked together for the attainment of peace in South Sudan.

### 3.3.3 Sexual harassment

Women interviewed said that there were many incidents of sexual harassment during the negotiation process. Many described occasions on which male participants would lewdly offer to have discussions in their hotel rooms, or make unwelcome comments on their physical appearance. This type of harassment cut across all age groups. The issue became so serious during the ARCSS negotiations that a group of women drafted a letter demanding that the mediators do something about sexual harassment.

The letter was to be signed by all women at the ARCSS peace talks, but some were too afraid of the potential backlash if they signed, and some even turned against the authors.<sup>187</sup> The authors of the letter were unable to get all the women's buy-in and, in the end, it was never delivered.

### 3.3.4 Funding sources

At the start of the ARCSS process, women were scattered in different places, but quickly started organizing. Some received funding from international organizations to convene and stay in Addis Ababa, while others had to fund their own engagement. Unequal access to support from international partners created competition between groups. 'Donors were dividing the women. In one instance, they gave money to another organization to implement an idea started by a different group, leading to the natural death of the other group,' an interviewee who would prefer to remain anonymous said.<sup>188</sup>

A lack of funds meant many women with aspirations to join the peace talks could not. Women involved in organizations with projects running in South Sudan also faced competing priorities. 'It is hard when you are participating in the peace process and at night you are staying up late working on a proposal to make sure your organization gets funding to continue the work back in-country,' explained Lopidia.<sup>189</sup>

### 3.3.5 Diverging interests

Unlike during the CPA, when southern Sudanese women were united around a cause, the civil conflict polarized South Sudanese women in political parties and civil society, blurring the ability of some to differentiate between personal allegiance to their parties and cross-cutting women's issues.<sup>190</sup> Merekaje tells of being shocked to see a woman contradicting another who had just spoken on behalf of women during the negotiations just because it was contrary to her party's position. 'One of my worst moments in the entire process was when the CPJ female delegates were kicked out of the negotiating room and the other woman present said nothing. She just watched that happen,' she recounted.<sup>191</sup> The absence of a common goal or agenda made it difficult for the women's groups present to collaborate.

## 3.4 IMPACT OF THE VARIOUS MODALITIES

Achieving inclusion for women in the ARCSS peace discussions was not easy. Obtaining observer status was a first step in getting women closer to the peace discussions, a modality that civil society women aligned to the Women's Bloc used to their advantage. Women embedded in the broader civil society structures were able to get closer to the negotiation table. Though they were still limited in their influence, being at the table accorded them the opportunity to push for tangible changes to the text of the agreement and influence the discussions. Some modalities of inclusion, such as consultations, were of limited use as they could not be effectively sustained due to the fast-changing

nature of the peace process. With the signing of the ARCSS, some women were included in new commissions, but none of the established institutions and mechanisms met the 25% quota.<sup>192</sup> The interviewees mentioned that it was difficult to push for tangible changes as members of the commissions, as conflict broke out in July 2016, halting any progress and plunging the country back into war.

Despite the limitations of some of these modalities, women involved in the ARCSS were able to speak out and make gains for broader women's groups, including:

1. **Women representatives were given signatory status in the ARCSS.** Whereas there were no women signatories in the CPA, in the ARCSS there were two. Amer Deng-Yak signed on behalf of the Women's Bloc of South Sudan; Alokiir Malual signed on behalf of the Civil Society Alliance. This can be regarded as a milestone, and arguably set a precedent for women's future representation.
2. **Women were included in the various committees of the transitional period, albeit not in large numbers.** This inclusion positioned women as leaders, challenging patriarchal notions of men as the most viable leaders. For example, Angelina Teny's appointment as the Chairperson of the SDSR board—the institution tasked with developing of security sector laws and policies—was notable in the patriarchal South Sudanese context.
3. **Women pushed for the inclusion for the establishment of a Hybrid Court, under which SGBV as well as other war crimes would be prosecuted.** Though the Hybrid Court is yet to be established as of January 2020, calls for its establishment continue and women argue that it will be an important avenue to secure justice for some of the 65% of South Sudanese women who have experienced sexual or physical violence.<sup>193</sup>
4. **Women successfully advocated for a gender adviser to be appointed to key institutions including JMEC.** In the *Women's Agenda for Peace and Sustainable Development* strategy document developed with support of UN Women, the women leaders called on the IGAD mediation to, 'Include gender specialists in all the technical and administrative structures of the mediation process including the secretariat.'<sup>194</sup> Betty Murungi was appointed as the Senior Gender Advisor to the JMEC, an institution which survived the resurgence of conflict. Her role was critical, as she regularly solicited input from women on the implementation of the agreement and was an internal advocate for women's participation and representation within the JMEC.<sup>195</sup> This advocacy point was also taken up in the R-ARCSS process where UN women seconded a Senior Gender Adviser to the Office of the IGAD Special Envoy on South Sudan in May 2018.

Women pushing for change and gender equality in Juba, South Sudan, during a peaceful demonstration in December 2018. Photo: Samir Bol.



# 4 WOMEN IN THE REVITALIZED ARCSS, 2017–2018

## 4.1 WOMEN'S ROLES DURING THE SOUTH SUDANESE CIVIL WAR, 2016–2018

Following the signing of the ARCSS, various South Sudanese women's groups were at the forefront of advocating for its effective implementation. On 24–25 November 2015, the South Sudan Women's Peace Network—a network of women's organizations, parliamentarians and activists—organized a National Women's Dialogue called 'The South Sudan We Want.'<sup>196</sup> This dialogue convened 480 participants from across the former 10 states, presenting them with 'an opportunity to exchange views and build bridges across ethnic, religious and political lines with a view of uniting and amplifying their voices in the implementation of the ARCSS.'<sup>197</sup> The women convened were organizing to resist any outbreak of conflict during the pre-transitional period as they noticed the non-implementation of the agreement three-months after it had been signed, noted Betty Murungi, then the Senior Gender Adviser at JMEC.<sup>198</sup>

In the statement issued after the National Women's Dialogue, women demanded the implementation of the peace agreement 'without further delay.'<sup>199</sup> Other demands included affirming the 25% affirmative action principle for women's representation and its application 'across the board in the implementation of the agreement where quotas are not specified,' reiterating the need for, 'immediate demobilization, reintegration and rehabilitation of women and children associated with armed forces,' and highlighting the need to 'ensure the safety, security and livelihood concerns of women are addressed during the implementation.'<sup>200</sup>

The National Women's Dialogue was followed by a National Women's Peace conference in Juba between 25-26 May 2016, drawing participants from women's organizations focused on peacebuilding in South Sudan.<sup>201</sup> During this conference, participants adopted a 7-point agenda, The South Sudan We Want, which sought to 'ensure that the implementation of the peace agreement includes, and works for, women.'<sup>202</sup> Specific demands included a call for gender-sensitive security sector arrangements, inclusion of women (at least 30%) in the Special Reconstruction Fund to be established under Chapter III of the ARCSS on Humanitarian Assistance and Reconstruction; and the need for expansive civic awareness on the mandates of all the Transitional Justice, and Accountability institutions, with a specific targeting of women.<sup>203</sup> Such documents helped women across different states consolidate their demands, an advocacy document that could be used by all.

However, in July 2016, less than a year after the ARCSS was signed, conflict broke out again between forces loyal to President Salva Kiir and those loyal to Vice President Riek Machar, forcing the latter to flee Juba. A number of South Sudanese women, as before, worked to raise international awareness of the situation across the world.<sup>204</sup>

In October 2016, Eve Organization—a women-led organization devoted to the peaceful empowerment of women in South Sudan and Uganda—held a peace dialogue in Nairobi to assess whether the ARCSS was still relevant.<sup>205</sup> Betty Sunday, coordinator of the Women's Monthly Forum, addressed the UN Security Council (UNSC) in March 2017, highlighting the security threats faced by women in South Sudan. She emphasized the need to implement the ARCSS because it offered a great opportunity for political transformation. She also highlighted the need for the UNSC to cooperate with the government of South Sudan to combat the high incidences of SGBV and human rights abuses.<sup>206</sup>

The Transitional Justice Working Group (TJWG), a coalition of CSOs engaged in promoting transitional justice, wrote a letter to the AU Peace and Security Council (AUPSC), recommending that ‘the Revitalized Agreement should be opened for discussion, but Chapter 5 of the [ARCSS]—which calls for justice and accountability—should not be opened for renegotiation. The provisions needed to remain as they were.’<sup>207</sup> The chair of the AUPSC replied that they would table a discussion on South Sudan at their next meeting, to which Nasiwa, a TJWG member, was invited to provide first-hand insights on the needs and concerns of the South Sudanese population.<sup>208</sup>

On 12<sup>th</sup> June 2017, following a number of IGAD and UNSC sessions on the situation in South Sudan, IGAD issued a communique stating its desire to ‘urgently convene a High Level Revitalization Forum (HLRF) of the parties to the ARCSS including estranged groups to discuss concrete measures, to restore permanent ceasefire, to full implementation of the Peace Agreement and to develop a revised and realistic timeline and implementation schedule towards a democratic election at the end of the transition period.’<sup>209</sup> IGAD also appointed Ambassador Ismail Wais as the IGAD Special Envoy for South Sudan and directed the Chairperson of JMEC and Executive Secretary of IGAD to ‘provide the necessary secretariat and logistical arrangements,’ to facilitate the HLRF.<sup>210</sup> Consequently, the JMEC staff including Betty Murungi, the Senior Gender Adviser and Stephen Oola, the Legal Advisor, were constituted as part of the HLRF Taskforce supporting the Special Envoy.<sup>211</sup> The tasks they undertook included organizing pre-HLRF consultations, developing the agenda for the HLRF, the list of the invited delegates, and the text of the agreement.<sup>212</sup>

Given that less than a year had passed since the previous agreement was signed, many of the women involved in the ARCSS process continued their engagement. Various international agencies organized meetings for women’s groups to meet with key influencers at the HLRF.<sup>213</sup> For instance, UN Women facilitated a meeting with the Troika Special Envoys in November 2017, at which women leaders from civil society groups demanded greater numbers and more meaningful inclusion of women in the proposed peace process; the enforcement of punitive measures; and accountability for crimes, especially SGBV.<sup>214</sup>

#### **Box 7: Timeline of the R-ARCSS**

- **7 July 2016:** Violence between the SPLM/A and SPLM/A-IO erupts in Juba.
- **12 June 2017:** Communiqué of the 31st extra-ordinary summit of IGAD assembly of heads of state and government on South Sudan that authorized the HLRF
- **12 December 2017:** Launch of the HLRF by IGAD at its Extra-Ordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government on South Sudan. The HLRF lasted 15 months, and involved negotiations between the SPLM/A, SPLM/A-IO and other political parties. Five keys agreements were signed, which eventually led to the signing of the R-ARCSS.
- **21 December 2017:** Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities, Protection of Civilians and Humanitarian Access signed in Addis Ababa.
- **February 2018:** Discussion on the Declaration of Principles.
- **22 May 2018:** Addendum to the Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities, Protection of Civilians and Humanitarian Access signed in Addis Ababa.
- **27 June 2018:** Khartoum Declaration of Agreement between Parties to the Conflict in South Sudan signed in Khartoum.
- **6 July 2018:** Agreement on Outstanding Issues of Security Agreements signed in Khartoum.
- **5 August 2018:** Agreement on Outstanding Issues on Governance signed in Khartoum.
- **12 September 2018:** R-ARCSS signed in Addis Ababa.

Source: C. Hazvinei Vhumbunu. (2019). *Reviving peace in South Sudan through the Revitalised Peace Agreement*. African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes. <https://www.accord.org.za/conflict-trends/reviving-peace-in-south-sudan-through-the-revitalised-peace-agreement/>

## 4.2 MODALITIES OF INCLUSION

### 4.2.1 High-level problem-solving workshop

On 16 August 2017, IGAD convened a two-day high-level problem-solving workshop in Bishoftu, Ethiopia called ‘IGAD High Level Independent Experts Meeting on the Revitalisation of the Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan’.<sup>215</sup> It was attended by 22 multi-disciplinary, independent, high-level South Sudanese experts with the intention of creating an ‘informal setting to engage in a frank dialogue and make recommendations as an input to the Revitalization Process.’<sup>216</sup> Four of the participants were women—Pauline Riak, Apuk Mayen, Emmily Koiti and Rita Lopidia. The women called for an increase in the number of women at the upcoming HLRF. ‘My focus throughout the meeting was ensuring that women’s participation [would be] central when the HLRF starts. I wasn’t even aware that I would be invited to be part of the process but I took the experts meeting as an opportunity to use it to the maximum to speak on women’s participation,’<sup>217</sup> Lopidia said.

It was also at this meeting that the idea of a new coalition of women’s organizations called the South Sudan Women’s Coalition for Peace was conceived. According to Riak, when the four South Sudanese women at Bishoftu met for tea during one of the breaks, the enormity of the challenge of South Sudan dawned on them: ‘We examined ourselves and our authority to speak. We decided that it was important that whenever the four of us were speaking in such a forum our voices represented a wider constituency and the only way to achieve this was if we were in contact with the voices of women across the nation.’<sup>218</sup> Bilateral meetings with the mediation team also reinforced the need to consolidate efforts of women’s groups. In one such meeting, the IGAD mediation team expressed the challenge of receiving different women’s groups in their office in Juba and wondered how they would manage women’s participation in the upcoming HLRF.<sup>219</sup> ‘This is [one of] the discussions that inspired the formation of the South Sudan Women’s Coalition for Peace,’ Lopidia recalled.<sup>220</sup> It was obvious that there was a lack of information flow among women leaders and women throughout the nation, regardless of numerous women’s organizations.<sup>221</sup> These sentiments were also echoed by members of the JMEC secretariat, who constantly received women’s groups with position papers and statements, but claiming no affiliation whatsoever to the then women’s signatory to the ARCSS, the Women’s Bloc.<sup>222</sup> ‘There was no overarching group that was filling that gap or there would be no need for us to have had any thoughts of organizing like we did.’<sup>223</sup>

The women at the High-Level experts meeting envisioned a loose coalition of like-minded women leaders who would convene on the project of peace and development. In September 2017, these women convened different women’s groups in Entebbe, Uganda.<sup>224</sup> The meeting aimed to be highly inclusive. Parliamentarians, members of the Women’s Bloc, women-led organizations, women from the diaspora, all were invited. Initially, ‘People—donors and other women’s groups—were sceptical [and said] “how are you sure you’re going to bring women’s groups together?” Because of past experiences. I was not even sure but I asked myself “what is there to lose?”’<sup>225</sup> Lopidia recounted. The South Sudan Women’s Coalition included over 45 women’s organizations from both South Sudan government and non-government-controlled areas; refugee camps in Uganda and Kenya; women members of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly (TNLA), clergy and peace activists to collectively push for a peaceful resolution to the conflict in South Sudan, and more women’s inclusion in the peace process. The women participants present at this first meeting voluntarily agreed that three organizations—EVE organization, the National Transformational Leadership Institute and SSWGGA would spearhead the coalition and ensure effective flow of information on peace and development to South Sudanese women.<sup>226</sup>

When the HLRF process was launched in December 2017, four members of the Women’s Coalition were invited to participate as delegates in the different phases of the HLRF, three of whom participated

in the High-Level experts' meeting. They continued to use the coalition as a place to coordinate their strategy and engagement with the R-ARCSS process.

## 4.2.2 Consultations

The IGAD Council of Ministers, Ambassador Wais and the HLRF Taskforce identified the different groups to be consulted during the pre-HLRF consultations and conducted consultations between 28<sup>th</sup> September 2017—1<sup>st</sup> November 2017.<sup>227</sup> The groups consulted included parties to the ARCSS, estranged groups (armed and unarmed), key stakeholders within ARCSS and those outside the ARCSS.<sup>228</sup> Every stakeholder invited and consulted was invited to make a written submission with concrete proposals.<sup>229</sup> 'We developed the agenda for the HLRF based on the consultations and the submissions made during the pre-consultations,' Oola recounted.<sup>230</sup>

Nyanath, then leading a civil society organization and living as a refugee in the Gambella region in Ethiopia, recalled a visit to Gambella by the IGAD Special Envoy where she was consulted as part of a women's group. 'We emphasized that the ARCSS is the key, we cannot throw away what has been achieved. Within the ARCSS, there are provisions that are very effective. We also emphasized that we must end the violence because simply as people who were already displaced, the pain of what we were going through was unbearable—especially women and children were the primary victims and were most at risk,' Nyanath recalls.<sup>231</sup> She was convinced that this meeting with the envoy played a role in her being invited to the HLRF. 'Prior to this meeting, they did not know me, but they met me at this meeting and when I received an invitation to the HLRF, I was invited to represent refugees and internally displaced people.'<sup>232</sup>

While the HLRF discussions were ongoing, the Women's Bloc and Women's Coalition would independently meet their members on their return from each of the negotiation phases. For example, in March 2018, the Women's Bloc held a meeting where they briefed over 180 women, ensuring that they were fully conversant with the HLRF, that they supported and understood the demands made by women, collectively discussed strategies on how to further engender the process and garnered input on the next phase of the HLRF.<sup>233</sup> The R-ARCSS discussions were more spaced out than the ARCSS discussions, with meetings in December 2017, February 2018, May 2018 and July–August 2018.<sup>234</sup> While the talks were being adjourned, the various stakeholders were made aware of what the agenda for discussion would be at the next phase, allowing room for strategizing with broader membership.

## 4.2.3 Mass action: protest marches

The Women's Monthly Forum continued organizing marches in partnership with the Women's Programme of the SSCC. On 9 December 2017, the Women's Coalition in partnership with the Monthly Forum and the SSCC, organized a silent march bringing 500 women to together in Juba.<sup>235</sup> They protested the continued rape of women, lack of access for humanitarian aid and the continued bloodshed.<sup>236</sup> One of the protesters, who identified herself as 'Catherine', told reporters: 'we, the women of South Sudan, are calling on our men to end the war because we need peace, because without peace we don't see any development. Women and children continue to suffer.'<sup>237</sup> Similar marches were organized by the Coalition in countries in which it had membership across Eastern Africa.<sup>238</sup> These marches were important as they kept the attention for the call for peace in the media.

## 4.2.4 Direct representation at the negotiating table

### Inclusion at the table

The R-ARCSS process saw the accreditation of more women and civil society activists as delegates with equal voice into the formal process. The HLRF Taskforce developed a delegate list based on

those stakeholders in the original ARCSS agreement, those stakeholders left out of the agreement; and those on the periphery but who had made strong submissions and suggestions on how to resolve the conflict in South Sudan during the pre-forum consultations.<sup>239</sup> 'The women and the civil society did something differently. The groups were first proactive to come up with insightful position papers, and held meetings where they came out with position papers – and for many of them, they were good positions that influenced the HLRF.'<sup>240</sup>

The women and civil society stakeholders who were signatories to the ARCSS continued as stakeholders in the R-ARCSS. The Women's Bloc had retained its network, and continued with Amer Deng-Yak as its chairperson and representative to the R-ARCSS negotiations. The Civil Society Alliance remained as a network, with Alokiir Malual as its chairperson and representative to the R-ARCSS negotiations.

When IGAD convened discussions on the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities in Addis Ababa on 17 December 2017, Deng-Yak and Lopidia were invited to the HLRF, representing the Women's Bloc and Eve Organization, respectively. 'When the formal process started, I was invited in my capacity as a gender expert and executive director of Eve Organization, but I took that opportunity to create more space for women. We had the Women's Coalition at that time and it was important to create more space for women. That's why most times, I spoke on behalf of the Women's Coalition', Lopidia told us.<sup>241</sup> The Women's Coalition as a network was not invited as an official stakeholder at the HLRF process; however, Lopidia pushed to have her representation changed from Eve Organization to Women's Coalition—this she felt was important to give the Coalition visibility and credibility as she would be speaking on behalf of a greater constituency of women.<sup>242</sup> These talks had a record number of women civil society delegates accredited to the talks. Of the 17 stakeholders who signed the R-ARCSS, seven were women.

IGAD also encouraged the political parties to include women in their delegations. Every delegation was expected to nominate three members with at least one woman. One letter to the head of a political party read 'I wish to kindly extend this invitation to you and two members of your organization. In this regard, I urge that at least one of the delegates is a woman.'<sup>243</sup> Some political parties including the incumbent Transitional Government of National Unity, SPLM/A-IO and the National Democratic Movement adhered to this at the first phase of the HLRF.

The women in civil society were cognizant of the 3:1 requirement of women's representation in the delegations and took stock of which parties adhered to this requirement at the different phases of the HLRF.<sup>244</sup> 'At the start of every subsequent HLRF discussion, we would count the number of women in the warring parties' delegations and acknowledge the parties that had women and those that did not have women, to call on them to include women,' Lopidia told us.<sup>245</sup> In a letter from the Women's Coalition to the heads of delegations of the parties, on 13 May 2018, a few days in advance of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Phase of the HLRF, the coalition noted that the number of women delegates remained 'extremely low [and ] below the required threshold' and reminded them to 'heed IGAD's call for inclusion of women... and [their] commitment to the affirmative action quota for women's representation.'<sup>246</sup> They also made it clear that women had been affected by the conflict and needed to be a part of its resolution.<sup>247</sup>

The number of women in the warring parties' delegations increased at each subsequent round of HLRF discussions.<sup>248</sup> Lopidia explained, 'at the start of the HLRF in December 2017, the number of women delegates was only 11 out of 90 participants; this increased with the start of the political negotiation in February 2018 to 23 delegates. By the end of the Addis Ababa rounds of talks in May 2018, there were 39 women delegates among 120 participants.'<sup>249</sup>

### **Contributions at the table**

While at the table, women representatives humanized the discussions by highlighting to the parties the tremendous suffering the people of South Sudan had undergone, and called for a cessation of

hostilities.<sup>250</sup> For instance, the opening statement delivered by Lopidia at the start of the first Phase of the HLRF discussions in part read: 'The situation in South Sudan has gone from bad to worse since the return to violence in July 2016. The situation of women and girls in the Republic of South Sudan and those in refugee camps has surpassed all levels of carnage. The mass displacement, the deteriorating economy, lack of protection, fear, insecurity, hunger, diseases and poverty, the sexual violence committed with impunity must not be tolerated and condoned.'<sup>251</sup> Koiti in her opening remarks at the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (COHA) discussions described the war as 'senseless and purposeless [where all] were losers,' and beseeched the leadership of the parties to the conflict for a 'permanent and enforceable ceasefire as [a] Christmas gift and nothing less.'<sup>252</sup>

Moreover, the women civil society delegates reminded the parties of the commitments they had made and the need to honor them, particularly when parties were dishonoring their commitments. At the start of the second phase of the HLRF, Koiti questioned the parties' to the conflict commitment to genuine peace—how on earth can one explain that on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2017, we were all here in Addis Ababa, signed a Cessation of Hostilities Agreement that was violated even before the signature ink dried off?'<sup>253</sup> She questioned them based on the violations of the ceasefire that had taken place less than a few days after the signing of the COHA.

Women civil society delegates also acted as interlocutors between the parties to the conflict—mediating between the different groups when they found it difficult to agree.<sup>254</sup> 'We would move from group to group in a very polite and as far as possible, neutral manner trying to understand the gut feelings of different groups and that helped us bring the groups together,'<sup>255</sup> Riak reflected. In one instance, just before the signing of the COHA, it was rumored that one of the armed parties to the conflict would not sign the agreement, claiming that some of the issues they had raised as a party had remained unresolved.<sup>256</sup> 'We were able to talk to them and convince them that sometimes you have to give more than you receive, sometimes you have to swallow your pride and your pain.'<sup>257</sup> The women delegates believed that this contributed in the group's eventual signing of the COHA.

All the women delegates made tangible contributions during the discussions, which shaped the agenda and trajectory of the discussions, and some of their contributions were adopted into the text of the agreement. In February 2018, the Declaration of Principles, the road map for the peace negotiations, was tabled.<sup>258</sup> In the ARCSS, a quarter of positions in the executive were to be given to women.<sup>259</sup> Lopidia, on behalf of the Women's Coalition, tabled a more ambitious target: 'I stood up and asked for a 50% affirmative action principle for women's representation at all levels of government. Amer [Manyok] Deng-Yak also asked for 50%. Edmund Yakani, a fellow civil society colleague then stood up and asked for 50%... For the first time, it seemed like all the men in the warring parties present in the room were united,'<sup>260</sup> Lopidia joked. Women delegates received pushback. 'The pushback was that women are not interested in joining the political space. They also said that there were no qualified women to occupy these positions.'

'Our counter-argument was that there were women who were more educated than them in the room. For others, the argument was that we were asking for higher numbers, yet the 25% in some aspects had not been occupied.'<sup>261</sup> The debate lasted over 45 minutes, the first time that gender or women's issues had been discussed for such a duration at the negotiating table. Eventually, Lopidia remembers Awut Deng Acuil, the then Minister of Gender and member of the incumbent TGoNU negotiating team saying, 'let us be realistic and go for 35%'.<sup>262</sup> According to Acuil, she proposed 35% as it was a position already assented to by the SPLM/A politburo and was a part of the SPLM constitution.<sup>263</sup> The other parties agreed, and this 35% affirmative action principle was adopted.<sup>264</sup> For the Women's Coalition, this was what they had wanted at this stage in the process: 'our stance on the affirmative action quota from our strategy meeting in Entebbe was 35%, but we said we would not use it as a negotiating point. If we [had started at] 35%, we would have ended up with 25%.'<sup>265</sup> None of the women in political parties signed the R-ARCSS on 12 September 2018 on behalf of their parties, but of the 17 stakeholders that signed seven women were signatories.

**Box 8: Women signatories to the R-ARCSS and their Representations**

- Rebecca Nyandeng Garang – Eminent Personalities
- Pauline Elaine Riak – For Academia
- Rita M. Lopidia – For Women’s Coalition
- Mary Akech Bior – For Women’s Bloc
- Alokiir Malual – For Civil Society of South Sudan
- Koiti Emmily – For Youth Representative
- Sarah Nyanath – For Gender Empowerment for South Sudan Organization

Source: *Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan*, (September 2018)

## 4.2.5 Inclusive commissions

Article 1.4.4 of the R-ARCSS called for the observation of women’s inclusion at 35% in the Executive, while some of the transitional institutions and mechanisms including pre-transitional institutions had particularly allocated seats for women’s representatives.<sup>266</sup> Although an increase in the number of women has been registered in a number of commissions such as the RJMEC, the meeting of the 35% quota is wanting in most institutions.<sup>267</sup> For example, on 25 September 2018, of the ten members appointed to the National Pre-Transitional Committee, only one was a woman.<sup>268</sup> South Sudanese women from different political parties and CSOs drafted a statement protesting this, and calling on the warring parties to reconsider their nominations.<sup>269</sup> This demand was not met. Furthermore, no women are represented on the Joint Military Commission or the Joint Transitional Security Commission, as can be observed in the table below.<sup>270</sup> **See Table 1 for a breakdown of figures.**

**Table 1: Women’s representation in the R-ARCSS institutions and mechanisms**

Institution/Mechanism	Total no. of representatives	No. of women	No. of men	Percentage of women represented
National Pre-transitional Committee (NPCT)	10	1	9	10%
National Constitutional Amendment Committee (NCAC)	15	2	13	13.3%
Independent Boundaries Committee (IBC)	13	3	10	23%
Technical Boundary Committee (TBC)	8	1	7	12.5%
Joint Defence Board (JDB)	16	0	16	0%
Joint Transitional Security Committee (JTCS)	16	0	16	0%
Joint Military Ceasefire Committee (JMCC)	15	0	15	0%
Strategic Defence and Security Review Board (SDSR-B)	20	3	17	15%
Ceasefire Transitional Security Arrangement Monitoring and Verification mechanism Board (CTSAMVM)	22	9	13	41%
Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (RJMEC)	23	8	15	34.8%

Source: *Women representation in the R-ARCSS institutions and mechanisms*. Obtained via correspondence with RJMEC Gender Adviser, Chantal Niyokindi

## 4.2.5 Other factors and strategies

Women civil society delegates, actors and political parties employed different strategies for engaging with the HLRF process.

### **Holding strategy meetings prior to the HLRF discussions**

Strategy meetings were an opportunity for the Women's Coalition and the Women's Bloc to gather their members, and develop position papers and communiqués to share in advance of negotiations. For example, in January 2018, a few days in advance of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Phase of the HLRF, the Women's Coalition developed a list of demands for the peace agreement, including 50% affirmative action for women, and for anyone found guilty of crimes against humanity to be barred from occupying official executive roles.<sup>271</sup>

Following the Women's Bloc strategy meeting in Juba in March 2018, the members developed a position paper demanding and recommending a number of items including an increase in the number of women in the HLRF to 35%, implementation of the COHA and the prosecution of those violating the COHA following the first two rounds of the HLRF.<sup>272</sup> These strategies were shared with the mediation team, the parties to the conflict and the international partners in advance of each round of talks to influence the process.

### **Establishing technical support teams for delegates**

Given the fast-paced nature of the peace negotiations, the women civil society delegates did not have adequate time to give input on all the proposals tabled at the negotiations. The Women's Coalition thus selected a team of seven women of diverse skills including mediation skills, content knowledge and advocacy skills to provide support. These women were tasked with reviewing proposals, ensuring that the language of the agreement was gender-sensitive and nothing was removed from existing documents, analysing the texts of the agreement, organizing meetings with key embassies to ensure that women's demands were echoed in all spheres, and seeking feedback from South Sudanese across the globe on their views on the proposals being tabled.<sup>273</sup> 'We could not have done both being at the table, doing analysis and knowing what people were saying and wanting. When I spoke, I felt much more empowered to make a statement because I knew I had a backing from a larger group and my views were not just coming from my head or heart,' remarked Riak on the Technical Support team's impact.<sup>274</sup> This Technical Support Team was also a source of emotional support to the women civil society delegates.<sup>275</sup>

### **Working with broader civil society**

Beyond the Civil Society Alliance, the South Sudan Civil Society Forum (SSCSF), a coalition of over 200 diverse civil society organizations, to which some of the women delegates also ascribed, emerged at the start of the R-ARCSS process. Every evening during the HLRF sessions, members of the SSCSF and the Women's Coalition would meet and debrief, strategize on who to engage the following day, and review documents together.<sup>276</sup> These meetings were important in harmonizing civil society groups' positions, enabling them to speak as a united front.<sup>277</sup>

### **Advocacy with regional bodies and international partners**

All the position papers prepared and communiqués issued after the strategy meetings were shared with the AU, IGAD and key embassies during the HLRF. This ensured that the women's demands were being echoed by allies. In a statement to the UNSC in April 2018 and to the AU in May 2018, Nasiwa reiterated the need to expedite the establishment of transitional justice institutions and preserve Chapter 5 (on justice and accountability) of the ARCSS, as well as setting up a special court

in South Sudan to bring justice to South Sudanese victims and end SGBV. She also called for a gender-sensitive approach to the monitoring and reporting of ceasefire violations.<sup>278</sup>

### **Inclusion-friendly mediators**

The presence of Hannah Tetteh, the chief mediator in the first and second phases of the HLRF discussions was of added value to the mediation and to the women in the peace process.<sup>279</sup> She ensured space for the discussion on the affirmative action quota and was constantly consulting with the women to understand their views.<sup>280</sup> The women in political parties, Women's Coalition and Women's Bloc also leveraged IGAD senior gender adviser, Rabab Baldo, to organize high-level meetings for the women at the HLRF. At one such meeting with the IGAD Council of Ministers in May 2018, the women delegates added their voices to those of civil society and others who were demanding that the two principals—Kiir and Machar—be allowed to meet. Until this point, Machar was held in South Africa and had not been allowed to participate in the peace discussions.<sup>281</sup> This demand had already been made to IGAD and the AU by other CSOs, and was at this point suggested at a very high-level.<sup>282</sup> The women delegates, hailing from both political parties and civil society, argued that for genuine peace to be attained, both principals needed to participate. These collective voices calling for the meeting of the two principals supported this demand. On 20 June 2018, the two principals met in Addis Ababa.<sup>283</sup>

## **4.3 CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS TO WOMEN'S INCLUSION IN THE R-ARCSS**

### **4.3.1 Insecurity**

Women activists involved in the R-ARCSS process, afraid of arrest, intimidation or harassment by the authorities on their return to Juba, would make detours to Nairobi or Kampala for a couple of days before quietly returning to Juba.<sup>284</sup> Indeed, threats to security mean that some women activists are still living in exile. 'I was threatened with arrest because of my engagement in the peace process. I was falsely accused of being an agent of the West, in particular the Troika, and of being anti-peace,' one woman participating in the R-ARCSS process who preferred to remain anonymous recounted. With such threats and intimidation, some chose to leave the country.

### **4.3.2 Diverging interests**

As with the ARCSS, the women represented at the R-ARCSS had different political and party interests, and at times a divergence of opinion on the best way to proceed, which at times made it difficult to agree. Reflecting on her own experience, Teny noted that, 'we always say that women come with different experiences and different dimensions to the talks [which is seen as more conciliatory compared to men]. But we women are just as divided by the power structures like everyone else.'<sup>285</sup> In the discussion on the Declaration of Principles, when the 35% affirmative action quota was agreed upon at all levels of government, one of the networks, the Women's Bloc refused to sign the document, sparking some tension at the HLRF.<sup>286</sup> 'When we met, our Women's Bloc members had pushed for a 50% affirmative action quota in line with the AU Gender Parity principle and other protocols. We were not going to accept anything less.'<sup>287</sup> Some of the other women delegates approached her informing her that 35% was still a gain for women and that she needed to sign. The following day however, other discussions took precedence and she never came around to signing the document.<sup>288</sup>

### 4.3.3 Funding sources

Various donor organizations and agencies were supportive of women’s engagement in the R-ARCSS process including UN Women, Oxfam, Norwegian People’s Aid, Berghof Foundation, Crisis Action among others. However, the ad hoc nature of funding for the women’s groups to engage in the peace process was a challenge for networks like the Women’s Coalition. ‘We did not always have a pool of funds available, so every time we wanted to organize a strategy meeting, we would have to reach out to various donors to pool resources and organize a meeting in advance of either process,’ Lopidia said.<sup>289</sup> Given the fast-paced nature of the process, this made it difficult for the networks to gather wider-constituencies to create feedback loops through which they could hear their views and consult on crucial matters of governance and security arrangements being tabled.

### 4.3.4 Personal sacrifices

Engagement in the HLRF process did not come without cost to the women delegates – all the women delegates made sacrifices. By committing their time, energy and resources to attend a peace process held outside the country, they gave up time that could have been spent with their organizations, careers or loved ones. Koiti recalls being very emotional at the opening of the discussions on the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement: ‘I knew that instead of sitting there, I should have been in a hospital treating patients, but there I was because my country was not in the best condition. The search for peace had taken precedence over other things—including my medical career.’<sup>290</sup> Such sentiments were also echoed by Deng-Yak who lamented having left her children behind and the negative impact her absence had on her business, as she engaged in seeking a peaceful solution to the conflict in South Sudan. ‘I have been leaving my children alone, sometimes when I sleep, I feel pain when I think of them. I abandoned my business and then I took my family issues secondary—I gave [the] Women’s Bloc priority because I didn’t want it to collapse.’<sup>291</sup> Engagement in the peace process often came with sacrifices to the women delegates—sacrifices that were not easily evident to other people.



Nyenagwek Kuol, a research participant, speaking at the conference for Peace and Security in Africa organised by Women Advancement for Economic and Leadership Foundation in Africa, 2017. Photo credit: Samia Babiker.

## 4.4 IMPACT OF THE VARIOUS MODALITIES

Women's groups' proactivity following the signing of the ARCSS process through calling for implementation of the then ARCSS and their advocacy after the outbreak of conflict in July 2016, positioned women as active participants and stakeholders in the search for a peaceful solution to the conflict. The inclusion of a few women in the High-level Expert workshop prior to the start of the HLRF and women's contributions through presenting position papers during the pre-HLRF forum consultations, reinforced the call for women's meaningful inclusion in the R-ARCSS process. When the R-ARCSS process commenced in December 2017, there was a steady increase of women's presence at the negotiating table. This gave women delegates the opportunity to articulate their concerns and priorities and contribute to critical discussions on nation-building. Sustained lobbying by CSOs on the need for a more inclusive process contributed to an increase in the numbers of women in the process. The women at the table employed different strategies including utilizing a technical support team to strengthen their contributions to the peace process. While direct causality is difficult to determine in some areas, undoubtedly having women delegates who echoed calls from broader women's groups increased their influence in the R-ARCSS. South Sudanese women's engagement in the HLRF led to some gains for the women:

1. **Increase in women's inclusion in the HLRF discussions:** From eleven women in December 2017, there was a steady increase to 39 women delegates in the HLRF by the time the talks were in Khartoum. IGAD included language on women's inclusion in the invitation letters to the warring parties. The women delegates when at the table highlighted the humanitarian crisis in the country, the plight of refugee women and children and in so doing humanized the discussions. They contributed to the content of the discussions beyond gender issues and held the parties accountable to their commitments including on the cessation of hostilities.
2. **Increase in the affirmative action principle from 25% to 35%:** Women delegates at the HLRF united across party lines and advocated for an increase in the quota for women's participation at all levels of government. Though in the final R-ARCSS agreement it was only guaranteed in the Executive and transitional justice mechanisms, it lays the foundation for its adoption in the Transitional Constitution of South Sudan at all levels of government.
3. **Provision for a female vice president:** The inclusion of the provision for a female vice president in the final R-ARCSS was a major achievement. Women's groups called for this in their advocacy, and citizens broadly expect that this will be honoured once a government is formed. In the event that the government is formed, it will be the first time a South Sudanese woman will have held such a major portfolio.
4. **Textual changes:** Women were able to contribute to textual changes to the peace agreement. Their inputs through proposals and submissions contributed to influencing the text of the agreement. For example, Koiti recalls suggesting in one plenary discussion on governance that "the agreement should be about "responsibility-sharing" not "power-sharing",<sup>292</sup> an assertion that she thought was essential for the warring parties to start viewing South Sudan as their responsibility, not a 'pie' from which everyone would get their 'slice' of power. This was incorporated in the text of the Declaration of Principles.<sup>293</sup>
5. **Increase in the numbers of women in the boards and institutions of the transitional period.**<sup>294</sup> This is crucial as the women are part of processes that are reviewing key laws such as security sector laws and contributing to constitutional amendments, are actively monitoring any ceasefire violations and monitoring the effective implementation of the agreement.

# 5 CONCLUSION

In all of the peace processes, South Sudanese women have been highly active and have made critical contributions. They have:

- Lobbied for the increased participation and representation of women;
- Called for the recognition and inclusion of women's particular needs in the agreements; and
- Encouraged the continuation of dialogue between conflict parties and called for sustainable peace.

## Direct representation and observer status

Women's direct representation at the negotiation table increased steadily from the CPA to the R-ARCSS process. This helped to increase their influence on the process and agreement, leading to the inclusion of gender-sensitive provisions. Women leveraged their participation to secure further increased numbers of women. During the CPA negotiations, women's groups broadly aligned to the SPLM/A lobbied successfully for their participation in the negotiating delegations. Support from Dr John Garang, the leader of the delegation, contributed to the inclusion of some women.

Women members of the SPLM/A in the CPA discussions enlightened their colleagues on the need for women's inclusion and women's rights. They believe this contributed to securing Article 20 of the *2005 Interim Constitution of South Sudan*, which guarantees equal rights for men and women under the Bill of Rights.<sup>295</sup> In the ARCSS negotiations, while the SPLM/A-IO initially had women in its delegation, the SPLM/A did not. Pressure from within the SPLM/A led to women's inclusion.

ARCSS negotiation delegates from broader civil society nominated gender-inclusive teams to the peace discussions through the Civil Society Alliance, the Citizens for Peace and Justice and Civil society in the diaspora. At the table, women members of civil society advocated for accountability for crimes committed, including the establishment of the Hybrid Court of South Sudan. Though the Women's Bloc pushed to be accredited as equal delegates, they were granted observer status in the ARCSS but full delegate status in the R-ARCSS process. Ultimately two women were signatories to the ARCSS in 2015 as 'other stakeholders.' Given the relatively short time span between the ARCSS and the R-ARCSS processes, some of the women present in the ARCSS continued their engagement in the R-ARCSS. The R-ARCSS saw an increase in the number of women-specific delegations from one to two, and an increase in the number of women signatories from two to seven.

## Inclusive commissions

Women's increased representation in delegations was also an important stepping stone to securing places in peace agreement implementation bodies and commissions.

There was a gradual increase in women's representation in post-agreement commissions from the CPA process to the R-ARCSS process. The increased quota for women's representation from 25% to 35%, while yet to be met, institutionalizes women's representation and is an important focus of ongoing lobbying.<sup>296</sup>

The building of coalitions and associations was a critical factor that contributed to the greater participation of women in the peace processes. These coalitions were critical to harmonizing the women's demands and developing joint positions that were presented during the peace process negotiations. Early inclusion of women in the CPA set a precedent for women's participation in future processes. Inclusion-friendly mediators during the R-ARCSS were also critical: they supported women

delegates' demand at the High-Level problem-solving expert meeting to include more women at the start of negotiations. The inclusion of a Senior Gender Adviser within JMEC and later IGAD was also important, as they facilitated links between women delegates and key stakeholders such as the IGAD Council of Ministers. Once women were present in the peace processes, structures such as the Technical Support Team dedicated to supporting women delegates in the R-ARCSS, and the support of the international community, who echoed some of the women's demands, enabled women delegates to make meaningful contributions on gender and broader aspects of security and governance.

## Consultations

Informal and formal consultations provided for the transfer of information between women outside the negotiations and those at the table. For women delegates during the CPA, consulting with members of women's associations was key to informing their positions. These consultations helped to keep women's groups informed of the peace discussions and to shape their input at the negotiating table. Consultation meetings also led to the development of key joint documents such as the 2016 seven-point agenda called *The South Sudan We Want*. This agenda was used to call the parties back to the negotiating table once the peace implementation process had stalled and to articulate women's demands when the R-ARCSS process began. Furthermore, the formal consultations held by IGAD during the High-Level expert meeting in 2017 created space for women delegates to encourage IGAD mediators to consult women during the pre-negotiation consultations and to push for increased representation of women in the peace process.

These consultations were effective due to different enabling factors like coalition building, the use of transfer strategies to share information between the women in the negotiation room and those outside, and the selection criteria and procedures used by the IGAD mediators. The coalitions made it easier for the IGAD mediators to consult a particular group, and the women in the different networks in turn carried the joint positions developed from the consultations to the peace processes. For instance, the 'Women's Agenda for Peace and Sustainable Development in South Sudan' called for the inclusion of Senior Gender Advisers in key institutions, a demand that was met with the placement of Senior Gender Advisers at JMEC and with the IGAD mediation team during the R-ARCSS process. IGAD, influenced by prior consultations, identified key women representing different constituencies like refugees and youth to be included in the peace discussions, facilitating more women's inclusion in the peace process as part of these social groups. The availability of funding, and the slightly greater amount of time in between sessions, particularly in the R-ARCSS peace process made it easier for women to hold strategy meetings in which they could collate their views and equip delegates with position papers.

## Obstacles

Throughout the processes, South Sudanese women continued to face obstacles and to be marginalized from key decisions. The patriarchal nature of South Sudanese society, which limited women from participating in public life, limited women's participation in peace processes. For instance, women in the CPA found it a huge challenge to breakthrough into the peace processes despite the contributions they made to the SPLM/A. In the ARCSS, women delegates encountered sexual harassment from male delegates. However, arguably in part due to the precedents set, there was a noted improvement by the time the R-ARCSS process took place. Despite gaining an affirmative action quota for women in transitional bodies, the 25% quota was never met in the ARCSS and the 35% has not yet been fully achieved in the R-ARCSS implementation bodies and commissions. Insecurity, threats and intimidation remain problems. Limited access to funding and resources have also been a barrier. The above challenges must be addressed to support women's continued participation and to strengthen their influence in the implementation of the current agreement.

Ultimately, the women of South Sudan have played and continue to play a critical role in the country's peace processes. With the R-ARCSS signed, a roadmap exists to guide women's engagement and participation. A concerted effort needs to be made by all—women's coalitions, political parties, and the international community—to ensure and increase women's ongoing and meaningful participation, and ultimately build sustainable peace.

During the international 16 Days of Activism against gender-based violence campaign in 2018, women networks rallied together in Juba, South Sudan, to demand for greater accountability and inclusive peace. Photo: Samir Bol.



# ANNEX 1: POLITICAL ENTITIES MENTIONED IN THIS REPORT

<b>National Congress Party (NCP)</b>	<p>The major political party that dominated Sudanese politics, founded in 1992 by the then president Omar al-Bashir.</p>
<b>Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A)</b>	<p>Founded in 1983 during the civil war in Sudan and, along with the Government of Sudan, a signatory to the CPA. The SPLM/A was led by Colonel Dr John Garang de Mabior, who briefly became First Vice President of Sudan following the agreement, before his death in a helicopter crash in 2005. On independence, the SPLM/A became the ruling party of South Sudan. It is currently led by President Salva Kiir.</p>
<b>Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/Army in Opposition (SPLM/A-IO)</b>	<p>Split from the SPLM/A in 2013, largely as a result of tensions between President Kiir and Vice President Dr Riek Machar, then one of the SPLM/A’s top-ranking commanders. The split resulted in the South Sudanese civil war. Dr Riek Machar is the Chairperson of SPLM/A-IO.</p>
<b>South Sudan Opposition Alliance (SSOA)</b>	<p>A coalition of nine different political parties and armed groups formed in February 2018 in Addis Ababa to address the core issues that caused the South Sudanese civil war</p>

# ANNEX 2: WOMEN INCLUDED IN THIS REPORT

## A2.1 INTERVIEWEES

1.	<b>Agnes Wasuk</b>	Coordinator of the National Women's Programme of the SSCC since 2013. Earlier, she worked in accounting for the regional government of southern Sudan in Juba prior to independence, and as a coordinator for the social ministry and education within the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Khartoum.
2.	<b>Alokiir Malual</b>	A representative and later chairperson of the Civil Society Alliance, and signatory during the ARCSS and R-ARCSS processes.
3.	<b>Amer Manyok Deng-Yak</b>	One of the founders of the Women's Bloc. A signatory to the ARCSS on behalf of the Women's Bloc and later Women's Bloc representative in the JMEEC (2016-2018). A delegate to the HILRF (2017–18), that led to the signing of the R-ARCSS.
4.	<b>Angelina Teny</b>	A high-ranking member of the SPLM/A-IO politburo and the current chairperson of the SDSR board of the R-ARCSS. She formed part of the SPLM/A-IO delegation during the ARCSS and the R-ARCSS negotiations. She was a state minister for energy and mining in Unity State (2005–10). She is married to the current chairperson of the SPLM/A-IO Dr. Riek Machar Teny.
5.	<b>Apuk Ayuel Mayen</b>	Member of the Taskforce on the Engagement of Women in Sudan and South Sudan, participated in the ARCSS negotiations providing technical support to the warring parties as a consultant for the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue. Currently serves as a diplomat for the Government of South Sudan in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.
6.	<b>Awut Deng Acuil</b>	One of the founding members of SWAN. She formed part of the SPLM/A delegation during the CPA negotiations, after which she was one of five commissioners to the interim constitution-drafting committee of 2005. Participated as part of the SPLM/A delegation during the ARCSS and R-ARCSS processes. She is a representative of the incumbent TGoNU in the RJMEC, and was serving as Minister for Gender, Child and Social welfare in South Sudan at the time of interview until August 2019, when she was appointed as the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, South Sudan.
7.	<b>Dr Emmily Koiti</b>	A medical doctor by profession, she served as a youth representative in the JMEEC (2016–18). She is a civil society activist and signatory to the R-ARCSS as a youth representative, as well as a member of the Women's Coalition for Peace and the South Sudan Civil Society Forum.
8.	<b>Jackline Nasiwa</b>	A legal expert, she is the Executive Director of the Centre for Inclusive Governance, Peace and Justice; a national NGO working for gender inclusion, peace building/reconciliation, access to justice and good governance. Prior to this she worked as the Public International Law Policy Group's South Sudan Country Representative and Program Specialist, providing technical assistance to South Sudanese civil society actors like the Women's

		Monthly Forum to more effectively engage in both formal and informal peace processes in the ARCSS. During the CPA, she served in the office of the chairperson of the Southern Sudan Referendum Bureau in the run up to the Referendum on independence in 2011.
9.	<b>Jemma Nunu Kumba</b>	The first female governor of Western Equatoria state in 2008. In 2012, she became the Acting Secretary General of the SPLM/A. She is currently the Minister for Gender, Child and Social Welfare.
10.	<b>Lona James Elia</b>	A member of SWAN and the SPLM/A during the CPA process. She later became a civil society actor during the ARCSS process, serving as coordinator of the CPJ network. She also served as a member of the Technical Support Team to the Women's Coalition for Peace. She is currently the Executive Director for Voice for Change, a CSO in South Sudan.
11.	<b>Merekaje Lorna</b>	A representative of CPJ during the ARCSS process. She is currently the secretary-general of South Sudan Democratic Engagement Monitoring and Observation Program, a member of the Women's Coalition and the women's representative to the Reconstituted National Constitution Amendment Committee.
12.	<b>Mary Justo Tombe</b>	Coordinator of the Taskforce for the Engagement of Women in Sudan and South Sudan, prior to South Sudan's independence. She conducted advocacy during the ARCSS process as part of the Taskforce. Currently information officer at the Women's Monthly Forum on Peace and Political Processes in South Sudan.
13.	<b>Nyandeng Malek</b>	A civil society activist in Nairobi during the CPA, and a member of the SPLM/A. After the signing of the CPA, she was appointed Deputy Governor of Warrap State (2007–09), and subsequently became the first female elected state governor in Sudan (2010–15).
14.	<b>Nyankuiir Garang de Mabior</b>	Daughter of the late Dr John Garang and Mrs Rebecca Nyandeng de Mabior, she accompanied her mother during the R-ARCSS negotiations as a member of the Former Detainees political party.
15.	<b>Nyenagwek Kuol</b>	Former member of the Former Detainees Political Party and their representative in the Independent Boundaries Commission until she resigned from her position and the party in July 2019. A former Minister of Information and Telecommunication—Warrap state. A member of the Women's Coalition for Peace.
16.	<b>Prof Pauline Riak</b>	One of the founding members of SWAN. She served as the Chairperson of the South Sudan Anti-corruption Commission between 2006 to 2013. She was a signatory to the R-ARCSS as a representative of 'academia' and one of the founding members of the Women's Coalition. At the time of the interview, served as the Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the University of Juba. She currently serves as the Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the University of Rumbek, South Sudan.
17.	<b>Rebecca Nyandeng Garang</b>	Participated in the liberation movement and on the frontlines during the civil war in Sudan as part of the SPLM/A. She served as the Minister of Roads and Transport of southern Sudan in the autonomous Government of Southern Sudan (2005-2011). She participated in the R-ARCSS, signing it as one of the 'Eminent Personalities'. She was married to the late Dr. John Garang de Mabior, the Chairperson of the SPLM/A until 2005.
18.	<b>Rita Lopidia Martin</b>	Cofounder and Executive Director of Eve Organization for Women's Development, she was a CPJ representative during the

		ARCSS. One of the founding members of the Women's Coalition for Peace, which she serves as coordinator. A representative and signatory to the R-ARCSS on behalf of the Women's Coalition and its representative in the RJMEC.
19.	<b>Rose (Pauline) Lisok</b>	Current Minister of Gender, Child and Social Welfare, Jubek State, South Sudan. Part of a committee of legal and other technical experts who advised church leaders attending the CPA discussions as part of civil society. She participated in the ARCSS discussions as part of the SPLM/A women who lobbied for inclusion of women in the SPLM/A negotiation team.
20.	<b>Sandra Bona Malual</b>	Participated in the ARCSS process as part of civil society on behalf of civil society in diaspora. Later aligned with the SPLM/A-IO in the R-ARCSS process.
21.	<b>Sarah Nene</b>	A member of Parliament in the incumbent Transitional Government of National Unity. Participated in the R-ARCSS process as a member of Other Political Parties.
22.	<b>Sitona Abdalla Osman</b>	One of the founders of multiple women's organizations in the 1990s, including the New Sudan Women's Federation. She participated in the SPLM/A delegation during the CPA negotiations. She is currently the Director General for Bilateral Relations in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, South Sudan.
23.	<b>Suzanne Jambo</b>	A member of the SPLM/A permanent delegation during the CPA process and concurrently the coordinator of the NESI civil society network. She is a politician, lawyer and human rights campaigner. She served as the SPLM/A's secretary for foreign relations (2010–3). Currently a political opponent of the incumbent president, having expressed interest in running for the presidency in the subsequently postponed 2018 South Sudanese general elections.
24.	<b>Zeinab Yassin</b>	Currently the chairperson of the SSWGA. Was a member of the SPLM/A within Sudan in the 1980s and early 1990s, continued her engagement to the SPLM/A in the 2000s while in the diaspora before moving back to Juba, South Sudan post CPA.
25.	<b>Anonymous</b>	One of the interviewees chose to remain anonymous for various reasons, including due to fear of security or reputational implications of their statements.

## A2.2 OTHER WOMEN IN THE REPORT

<b>Aguil Chut</b>	A founding member of the Women's Bloc, and engaged in the ARCSS process in this capacity.
<b>Anne Itto</b>	One of the women in the SPLM/A delegation during the CPA negotiations. Currently represents South Sudan in the East African Legislative Assembly.
<b>Beatrice Aber</b>	Participated in the ARCSS as part of the SPLM/A delegation. Currently a member of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly representing the SPLM/A.
<b>Betty Murungi</b>	Served as a Senior Gender Advisor to the JMEC (2016–8). Member of the Africa Group for Justice and Accountability.
<b>Betty Sunday</b>	Coordinator of the Women's Monthly Forum on Peace and Political Processes in South Sudan. She also serves as a Deputy Representative for South Sudan in the Regional Women Movement Forum, a body with particular focus on advocating for peace in South Sudan and Burundi. Currently serves as a Gender Officer at the Community Empowerment for Progress Organization in South Sudan.
<b>Dr Priscilla Nyanyang</b>	During her lifetime, a South Sudanese politician, peace activist and associate professor of community medicine at the University of Juba's College of Medicine. Between 2005 and 2010, she served as a member of the National Assembly (representing the SPLM/A) and chairperson of the Human Rights Committee in the South Sudan parliament. She served as deputy minister of gender, child and social welfare (2011–13).
<b>Joy Kwaje</b>	Part of a committee of legal and other technical experts who advised church leaders attending the CPA discussions. Currently a member of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly.
<b>Mary Akech</b>	Founding member of the Women's Bloc, she served as a woman's representative to the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangement Monitoring Mechanism (2016–8). Signatory to the R-ARCSS on behalf of the Women's Bloc. Currently serves as a representative of the Women's Bloc in the RJMEC.
<b>Mary Nyaulang</b>	Participated during the ARCSS as part of the SPLM/A delegation. Currently representing the SPLM/A in the Transitional National Legislative Assembly.
<b>Rebecca Joshua</b>	A member of SWAN. Until August 2019, was South Sudan's Minister for Roads and Bridges.
<b>Sarah Nyanath</b>	Initially a member of the SPLM/A during the CPA peace negotiations, she trained as part of the Women's Battalion. She served in the former Upper Nile State as the Deputy Chairperson of the Upper Nile Legislative Assembly, and as Minister of Social Development (2010). Participated in the ARCSS process as part of the SPLM/A-IO delegation. She became part of civil society during the R-ARCSS, of which she was a signatory for non-government-controlled areas. She is the founder and Executive Director of the Gender Empowerment for South Sudan Organization, and serves as the civil society representative to the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Monitoring and Verification Mechanism from 2018 to present.

# ANNEX 3: CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS AND GROUPS

Citizens for Peace and Justice (CPJ)	Brought together more than 60 civil society representatives, more than a third of whom were women, for a conference in Nairobi aimed at developing concrete plans to secure a resolution to the crisis in 2014–5. In the ARCSS process, CPJ was represented by four delegates, two of whom were women: Rita Lopidia and Merekaje Lorna.
Civil Society Alliance	An alliance of CSOs from South Sudan accredited as civil society delegates at the ARCSS negotiating table by June 2014. Sent seven representatives to the ARCSS negotiations, two of whom were women: Alokiir Malual and Hellen Killa. Alokiir Malual was a signatory to the ARCSS and R-ARCSS process.
European Coalition on Oil in Sudan (ECOS)	Established in 2001 following a call from Sudanese churches and civil society to bring to an end the fuelling of war by oil. Over 50 European organizations supported the goals of ECOS and from 2001 to 2012, ECOS united their research and advocacy work on oil in Sudan, producing a dozen studies and lobbying governments and businesses to ensure that Sudan’s oil wealth contributed to peace and respect for human rights.
Eve organization	A women-led organization devoted to the peaceful empowerment of South Sudanese women in the country and regionally.
Isis-Women’s International Cross -Cultural Exchange (Isis-WICCE)	An action-oriented women’s resource centre started in 1974 in Geneva, Switzerland that relocated to Kampala in 1993. Founded in response to the need for women from various regions of the world to communicate ideas, create solidarity networks and share information to overcome gender inequalities. Supported South Sudanese women to participate in the peace negotiations in Addis Ababa in 2014–5.
New Sudanese Indigenous Network (NESI)	A network of 67 indigenous Southern Sudanese NGOs that addressed issues including human rights, participatory governance, development, post-conflict strategies and advocacy for a just and lasting peace in Sudan. It was formed in 2000 and active during the CPA process.
New Sudan Women’s Federation (NSWF)	Founded in the 1990s by women leaders including Sitona Abdalla Osman, with support from Dutch International NGO Novib (now Oxfam Novib), and operating in areas under SPLM/A control during the second half of the 1990s. The organization worked on advocating for women’s rights as human rights through women’s socio-economic empowerment and political status.
South Sudan Civil Society Forum (SSCSF)	A coalition of more than 200 independent civic groups, including CSOs, women and youth groups, academics and community-based organizations from across South Sudan. It was established in December 2017 with the aim of providing unified contributions to the HLRF.
Sudan Council of Churches (SCC) & South Sudan Council of Churches ((SSCC)	SSC was a coalition of multi-denominational churches which provided an umbrella under which peace consultations were conducted, dating back to the CPA process and its successor. SSCC has been key in organizing marches during the R-ARCSS.
South Sudan Women Coalition for Peace (‘Women Coalition’)	Formed in September 2017, a coalition of 45 women’s organizations from South Sudan government-controlled and non-government-controlled areas; refugee camps in Uganda and Kenya; women

	members of the TNLA, clergy, CSOs and peace activists that collectively pushed for a peaceful resolution to the conflict in South Sudan, and for more women's inclusion in the peace process.
South Sudan Women's General Association (SSWGA)	A network of women leaders spanning the former ten states of South Sudan that works to elevate women's issues in the building of a new state.
South Sudan Women's Peace Network	A network of women's organizations, parliamentarians and activists who, in 2015, organized a National Women's Peace Dialogue.
Sudanese Women's Association in Nairobi (SWAN)	Formed by southern Sudanese women in Kenya in 1986. It went on to become an association with over 800 members.
Sudanese Women's Voice for Peace	Founded in 1994 in Nairobi with the aim of uniting southern Sudanese women across ethnic and religious groups, the organization called attention to the impact of the conflict on women and children.
Taskforce for the Engagement of Women in Sudan and South Sudan ('the Taskforce')	The Taskforce comprised of women leaders from both sides of the border prior to South Sudan's declaration of independence, supported by INGO Inclusive Security. The aim was to have 20 people as 'peacebuilders' to ensure the inclusive implementation of the nine Cooperation Agreements between both countries. Following the outbreak of conflict in 2013, the Taskforce transformed into an advocacy entity for national instead of bi-national issues, pushing for women's inclusion in South Sudan's national peace process.
Transitional Justice Working Group (TJWG)	A coalition of CSOs engaged in transitional justice initiatives. Its aim was to support the implementation of Chapter V of the ARCSS, on justice, and provide an interface between national and international transitional justice stakeholders and the official transitional justice processes.
Women Advocacy for Peace	A group which was formed to lobby for the participation of women in the ARCSS process.
Women's Bloc of South Sudan	A coalition of women-led organizations and individuals formed to represent women in the IGAD-led peace process in Addis Ababa in 2014. The Women's Bloc was a stakeholder in the ARCSS peace process and their chairperson, Amer Manyok Deng, was a signatory. A representative from the Women's Bloc, Mary Aketch, signed the R-ARCSS.
Women Cry for Peace Coalition	Based in Nairobi, this coalition was a vocal advocacy group calling for an end to the South Sudanese civil war during the ARCSS. The coalition sent women to participate in the peace negotiations in Addis Ababa.
Women's Monthly Forum on Peace and Political Processes in South Sudan ('Women's Monthly Forum')	Founded in 2014, bringing together diverse women to push for inclusion in the ARCSS peace process and to coordinate the voices of women from the grassroots to provide input for those participating in the ARCSS negotiations. The Forum held peaceful processions in Juba during the ARCSS, calling on parties to go back to negotiations. The Forum has continued to advocate for women's inclusion in the implementation and monitoring of the agreement.
Women's Battalion ( <i>Katiba Banat</i> )	A battalion comprised of southern Sudanese women fighters and soldiers formed in 1984. They received military training in Ethiopia and other parts of the world.

# NOTES

All links last accessed September 2019 except where specified.

- <sup>1</sup> T. Paffenholz et al. (2015). *Making Women Count – Not Just Counting Women: Assessing women’s inclusion and influence on peace negotiations*. UN Women and the Inclusive Peace & Transition Initiative, p. 14. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2017/5/making-women-count-not-just-counting-women>
- <sup>2</sup> A. Itto. (2006). *Guests at the table? The role of women in peace processes*. Conciliation Resources. [https://rc-services-assets.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/accord18\\_19Guestsatthetable\\_2006\\_ENG.pdf](https://rc-services-assets.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/accord18_19Guestsatthetable_2006_ENG.pdf)
- <sup>3</sup> P. Riak. (October 2018). Correspondence with author.
- <sup>4</sup> UN Women. (2012). *UN Women Sourcebook on Women, Peace and Security*. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2012/10/un-women-sourcebook-on-women-peace-and-security> p. 6, citing:  
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- <sup>242</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>243</sup> Letter dated 6<sup>th</sup> November 2017 to Gabriel Changson Chang of the Federal Democratic Party, *Invitation to the ARCSS High Level Revitalization Forum in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 16-22 December 2017*
- <sup>244</sup> R. Lopidia (October 2018). Correspondence with author.
- <sup>245</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>246</sup> Kampala, 13<sup>th</sup> May 2018 – Letter written to the heads of delegations of the Parties to the South Sudan Conflict by the Women's Coalition "Women Representation in your Delegations."
- <sup>247</sup> Ibid.
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- <sup>251</sup> *South Sudan Women Coalition for Peace Opening Statement, The High Level Revitalization Forum on the ARCIS, Addis Ababa, 18 December 2017* – Unpublished. Obtained through author's correspondence with Rita Lopidia
- <sup>252</sup> Opening Remarks by youth representative to HLRF, Emmily Koiti, December 2017, Received by correspondence with author.
- <sup>253</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>254</sup> P. Riak. (October 2019). Correspondence with author.
- <sup>255</sup> Ibid.
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- <sup>258</sup> J. Tanza, Voice of America News, *South Sudan Opposition: Government lacks will to work for peace*, 16, February 2018 <https://www.voanews.com/archive/south-sudan-opposition-government-lacks-will-work-peace>
- <sup>259</sup> See the Transitional Constitution of the Republic of South Sudan 2011 (as amended to 2013), available here : <https://constitutions.unwomen.org/en/countries/africa/south-sudan>
- <sup>260</sup> R. Lopidia (October 2018). Correspondence with author.
- <sup>261</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>262</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>263</sup> A. Acuil (October 2019). Correspondence with author
- <sup>264</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>265</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>266</sup> IGAD. (n.d.). *Signed Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan*. Downloadable from: <https://igad.int/programs/115-south-sudan-office/1950-signed-revitalized-agreement-on-the-resolution-of-the-conflict-in-south-sudan>
- <sup>267</sup> For some time, the Ceasefire Transitional Security Arrangement Monitoring and Verification Mechanism consisted of 43% women (<https://www.womenpeacesecurity.org/region/africa/eastern-africa/south-sudan/>), but this has reportedly dropped again below 35% as women have moved to other positions.
- <sup>268</sup> Radio Tamazuj. (2018, September 27). *Women demand 35 percent representation in NPTC*. <https://radiotamazuj.org/en/news/article/women-demand-35-percent-representation-in-nptc>
- <sup>269</sup> J. Tanza, Voice of America News, *South Sudanese women want political quota respected*, 27 September 2018, <https://www.voanews.com/archive/south-sudanese-women-want-political-quota-respected>. Full statement can be obtained through correspondence with author.
- <sup>270</sup> The table takes into consideration the South Sudanese board member appointees to the institutions and does not take into account regional guarantors and members of the International Partners' Forum accredited to some institutions. *Women representation in R-ARCSS institutions and mechanisms*, Source RJMEC. Unpublished. Obtained through correspondence with RJMEC Senior Gender Adviser, Dr. Chantal Niyokindi.

- <sup>271</sup> South Sudan Women Coalition Communique. (2018). *South Sudan Women's Demands Ahead of Phase Two of the High-Level Revitalization Forum (HLRF)*. Unpublished paper.
- <sup>272</sup> *National Women Bloc of South Sudan Position* "Women's Bloc of South Sudan. Unpublished. Obtained by author correspondence with Amer Manyok Deng-Yak.
- <sup>273</sup> P. Riak (October 2018). Correspondence with author.
- <sup>274</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>275</sup> R. Lopidia (October 2018). Correspondence with author.
- <sup>276</sup> A. Alak (September 2019), Correspondence with author.
- <sup>277</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>278</sup> *Statement to the UN Security Council* by Jackline Nasiwa, National Director, Center for Inclusive Governance, Peace and Justice. 8 May 2018. Can be accessed here <https://www.womenpeacesecurity.org/peacebuilder-resource-un-security-council-briefing-south-sudan-jackline-nasiwa-may-2018/>
- <sup>279</sup> E. Koiti (November 2018). Correspondence with author.
- <sup>280</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>281</sup> A. Alak. (September 2019). Correspondence with author.
- <sup>282</sup> R. Baldo. (September 2019). Correspondence with author.
- <sup>283</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>284</sup> Anonymous Interviewee. (December 2018). Correspondence with author.
- <sup>285</sup> A. Teny (December 2018). Correspondence with author.
- <sup>286</sup> B. Murungi (October 2019). Correspondence with author.
- <sup>287</sup> A. Deng-Yak (December 2018). Correspondence with author.
- <sup>288</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>289</sup> R. Lopidia. (October 2018). Correspondence with author.
- <sup>290</sup> E. Koiti. (November 2018). Correspondence with author.
- <sup>291</sup> A. Deng-Yak (December 2018). Correspondence with author.
- <sup>292</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>293</sup> Text of the Declaration of principles. Obtained through correspondence with IGAD Special Envoy's Office.
- <sup>294</sup> *Women representation in R-ARCSS institutions and mechanisms*, Source RJMEC. Unpublished. Obtained through correspondence with RJMEC Senior Gender Adviser, Dr. Chantal Niyokindi
- <sup>295</sup> A. Acuil (October 2019). Correspondence with author.
- <sup>296</sup> R. Lopidia (October 2018). Correspondence with author.