



South Sudan Watch Update 26 October – 2 November 2018



Amidst Peace, fighting breaks in Kajo Keji

Despite the ceasefire and peace revitalization treaty, there have been several cases of continued fighting in South Sudan. Last week there fighting in Kajo-Keji county in Yei River State between the SPLA and rebel forces led by Dr. Riek Machar. The deputy spokesperson of the SPLA-IO, Col. Lam Paul Gabriel, said government troops attacked their positions on Friday morning.¹

War blocks aid from reaching

The continued fighting in South Sudan makes it difficult to deliver food aid to the people facing hunger says the World Food Programme (WFP). The fighting that has continued in Bahr el Ghazal and Central Equatoria has left tens of thousands of people in need of food according to the WFP. The WFP added that Baggari, southwest of Wau, has alarming rates of hunger but the insecurity in the area makes it hard to reach the people to provide them with aid. When they were able to access Baggari for a brief moment last month, the WFP said they found the rate of acute malnutrition was about 25% as compared to the 4% earlier this year.²

Civil society calls for focus on peace implementation

The South Sudan Civil Society Forum (SSCSF), which is a coalition of civil society in South Sudan, released a statement where they asked political leaders of their country to focus on the implementation of the peace agreement instead of peace celebrations. In the statement, the SSCSF recognized the achievements of the peace deal so far, such as the release of political prisoners and the formation of

¹ "FIGHTING BREAKS OUT IN KAJO-KEJI COUNTY, SPLA-IO BLAMES GOVERNMENT TROOPS FOR ATTACKING THEM," Nyamilepedia 26 October 2018, available at <https://www.nyamile.com/2018/10/26/breaking-fighting-breaks-out-in-kajo-keji-county-spla-io-blames-government-troops-for-attacking-them/>

² "South Sudan violence blocking food aid, says U.N.'s WFP," Reuters, 29 October 2018, available at https://www.reuters.com/article/us-southsudan-unrest/south-sudan-violence-blocking-food-aid-says-u-n-s-wfp-idUSKCN1N31LB?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+Reuters%2FworldNews+%28Reuters+World+News%29&rpc=401

the pre-transitional committee, however they insisted that leaders should focus more on implementing peace and confidence building measures.³

Group calls for the release of detainees

The human rights advocacy group Centre for Peace and Justice (CPJ) called on the government of South Sudan to release Peter Boar Ajak and other political prisoners on the day of the peace celebrations. CPJ said in a statement that they did not see why they should celebrate while their colleagues are still detained. It can be recalled that Peter Boar was arrested on 28 July 2018 at Juba airport.⁴

However, during the national peace celebrations on 31 October, President Salva Kiir promised to release two political detainees, James Gatdet and William Endley. James Gatdet is a former spokesperson for Dr. Riek Machar and William Endley is a South African who was sentenced to death in February after he was accused of providing military support to Machar.⁵

Regional leaders in Juba celebrations

On Wednesday 31 October, the government of South Sudan held peace celebrations marking the successful signing of the peace deal. The president sent invitations to all the stakeholders in the peace process and regional leaders to join him in Juba. The event saw the return of Dr. Riek Machar to Juba for the first time since 2016 and visits from regional leaders such as Uganda's president Museveni, Sudan's President Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir, Somalia's Mohamed Abdullahi Farmajo Mohamed, Eritrea's Isaias Afwerki, Ethiopian's Sahle-Work Zewde and Egyptian Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly.⁶

³ "CIVIL SOCIETY GROUP URGES SOUTH SUDAN POLITICIANS TO FOCUS ON PEACE IMPLEMENTATIONS RATHER THAN CELEBRATIONS," Nyamilepedia, 29 October 2018, available at <https://www.nyamile.com/2018/10/29/civil-society-group-urges-south-sudan-politicians-to-focus-on-peace-implementations-rather-than-celebrations/>

⁴ "CPJ calls to release activist and political detainees ahead of Peace celebration in South Sudan," *Sudan Tribune*, 30 October 2018, available at <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article66518>

⁵ "President Kiir frees two political prisoners," *Daily Monitor*, 1 November 2018, available at <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/President-Kiir-frees-two-political-prisoners/688334-4831410-222b3pz/index.html>

⁶ "Museveni in Juba for South Sudan peace celebrations," *Daily Monitor*, 31 October 2018, available at <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/Museveni-Juba-South-Sudan-peace-celebrations/688334-4830568-bp65c0/index.html>

Kiir apologies

President Salva Kiir during his address at the peace celebrations on Wednesday said that he and the other parties have to forgive each other. He added that the event marked the end of the war in South Sudan. Kiir ordered his soldiers to allow all people to move freely and urged the opposition to do the same. He also said he would facilitate the movement of humanitarian supplies and aid to the people that need them the most. President Kiir made an apology to the people of South Sudan saying that he was sorry on behalf of all the parties for having caused the people immense suffering. He expressed regret for the physical, emotional and mental wounds that the people have endured.⁷

At the same celebrations, the leader of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, David Shearer, said that the next thing would be build trust amongst all the parties that signed the peace deal so that the peace can be lasting and the people of South Sudan can flourish.⁸

⁷ "Kiir: I and Machar have forgiven each other," Radio Tamazuj, 1 November 2018, available at <https://radiotamazuj.org/en/news/article/kiir-i-and-machar-have-forgiven-each-other>

⁸ "UNMISS head says building trust is next big hurdle to sustainable peace," Radio Tamazuj, 1 November 2018, available at <https://radiotamazuj.org/en/news/article/unmiss-head-says-building-trust-is-next-big-hurdle-to-sustainable-peace>