



APPENDIX A: Country-of-Origin Context – The Sudan – West, North, & South Sudan.

The context of the ongoing violence in South Sudan involves the ongoing conflicts within its northern and southern neighbouring states, Sudan and Uganda, respectively. The pictorial map in **figure 1** illustrates the scope of the conflicts that embroiling the region and countries of Sudan. In the north, west, and south, civil wars are ravaging the civilian populations, providing few avenues for escape. The conflict south of Sudan involves the infamous Lord's Resistance Army, led by warlord Joseph Koney. The nation of South Sudan is only just barely a state. It was granted sovereign statehood in 2011 after decades of bitter civil war led by the Christian-Animist African tribes, Dinka and Nuer. For most of the last century, the region known today as South Sudan was a vassal state and resource extraction for the Arab government in Khartoum. South Sudan's successful bid for independence has much to do with the United States' war against Al Qaeda and its leader, Osama Bin Laden. Before his attack on 9/11, Bin Laden lived in a villa in Khartoum provided by then Sudanese president Omar Bashir, whose government and elites sought public recognition and acceptance for their claim to be Arab, despite the obvious differences between their phenotype and that of the actual Arabs of the Arabian Peninsula. To say this succinctly, Sudan's Arabs desire to 'be Arab' more than the real Arabs whom they mimic and worship. In many ways the new state of South Sudan is largely an American creation, "carved out of war-torn Sudan in a referendum largely orchestrated by the United States, its fragile institutions nurtured with billions of dollars in American aid."¹ The conflicts in Sudan, and much of Africa, have been inadvertently aggravated during the intervention of Western diplomacy, humanitarian agencies and media. Western society, seeking to alleviate the visible part of the violent conflict, interacts with the new and emerging leaders who are poorly grounded within their own disintegrating cultures even as they are exposed to egocentric, individualistic western identity models that are not reflective of tribal identity or their preparation to merge into a globalised order of independent societies. ² There are primal forces at work in the civil conflicts in Sudan's African west and south, and Sudan's Arab central and north, which is "ground zero for Africa's crisis of collective identity."³ These conflicts are physical, emotional, spiritual, and psychological. They rage between and within those who identify themselves as Arab, and those who identify themselves as African. Between those who identify themselves as Christian, Animist, and Muslim, and between those who identify as African Nuer, Dinka, or one of the other 60 African ethnicities of South and West



Figure 1 Pictorial map of greater Sudan

¹ (Landler, 2014)
² Paul Riesman, "The Person and the Life Cycle in African Social Life and Thought," *African Studies Review*, 29, no. 2 (1986): 71-138.
³ (Christian, 2013a)



Sudan.⁴ The genesis of these conflicts is the origin of the tribes' modern historical narrative and collective identity, nearly four centuries in the making. The historical narrative of these tribes and the group identity contained therein are products of unions between Arab and African, Christian and Muslim, Farmer and Pastoralist, Caucasoid and Negroid, Slave and Master. Each of these combinations of identities plays roles in enraged psychosocial dramas of subjugation or salvation, depending on whether the viewpoint is from the south or from the north, or from the east or the west. In each of the civil wars illustrated in **figure 1**, the "battle between autonomy and merger is fought most ferociously around relationships of domination"⁵ For reasons explained below, the African tribes of both Darfur and South Sudan have suffered unimaginable horrors over the past decades, much of which I was a personal and professional witness to as first a soldier and later, an academic field researcher. The atrocities committed against those in South Sudan were first, from African-Arab northerners pushing ethnic cleansing and religious conversion. Later, villages of Dinka and Nuer were massacred in ethnic instigation of bloody victimisation, alienation, shame, and encouraged rage by political actors seeking power in the new state. The conflict now in South Sudan has, potentially, become intractable, in that even after the political disagreements have been resolved, the populations are locked into desperate psychosocial traumatisation that fuels the fires of violence. This occurred because the Arab north did not merely attack the African south physically, but also psychologically and sociologically. The intended effect was to induce ethnic conversion from African to Arab through rape as a weapon of war and to induce religious conversion through the labelling of Animist and Christianity as apostasy punishable by death.⁶ The outcome effects on the victimised populations served to destabilise and malform the collective identities of Dinka, Nuer, and others, into monstrous versions of their former peaceful selves.⁷ While the African tribes of South Sudan were fighting for their physical survival against an Arab north, they remained within a state of 'meta-contrast,' united by a common existential threat. The generations of Dinka, Nuer, etc., who lived, died, and survived during these decades, did so under an increasingly deformed phenomenological reality, where to fight was to survive, and where peace



Figure 2 Actual sign in Misseriya, Sudan, headquarters of the notorious 'Janjaweed' which prides itself on attacking by motorised vehicle, horse, and camel.

⁴ The African tribes of South Sudan, Darfur, and Eastern Chad are not confined to political geographical boundaries, just as the Arab Baggara and Abbala do not recognise the superiority of political boundaries against their historical rights of movement. Generally, the Dinka and Nuer tribes live in South Sudan, and the Fur, Masalit, and Maba tribes live in Western Sudan and Eastern Chad. But there are always exceptions.

⁵ Charles Lindholm, *Culture and Identity* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2008), 217.

⁶ I have spent thousands of hours interviewing Arab Baggara and Abbala fighters and their civilian leaders, whose intentions and viewpoints I relate here.

⁷ (F. M. Deng, 1995; Jeppie, 2001; Sharkey, 2007)



was a form of surrender and physical-psychological death.⁸ In the sections that follow, I will lay out briefly, the current leaders and social-political-militia organisations involved as necessary background context. The utility of this is to lay the foundation for understanding the mental and emotional affect of the past and present violence on the populations of Dinka and Nuer in South Sudan, which gives us insight into the intractable violence now ongoing in Sudan's north, south, and western regions.

§A1 Arab – African Civil War in Sudan – SPLA (South Sudan), SLA (Darfur), Arab Janjaweed, & Sudan Islamic Government.

The civil wars between Africans and Arabs in Darfur and South Sudan are not yet history. In fact, they are not yet even over despite premature celebrations of western diplomats eager to move on to their next postings before reality unravels their narratives of success. The motivating drivers of the extreme violence between Arabs and Arabs, between Arabs and Africans, and between Africans and Africans, are not new, but much of their impact on the conflicts is poorly understood by diplomatic, military, and humanitarian observers. The next several sections illustrate how these various intra and inter-ethnic conflicts shape and explain the ongoing violence in South Sudan.

§A1.2 Historical Contexts of Slavery in Arab – African Relationships.

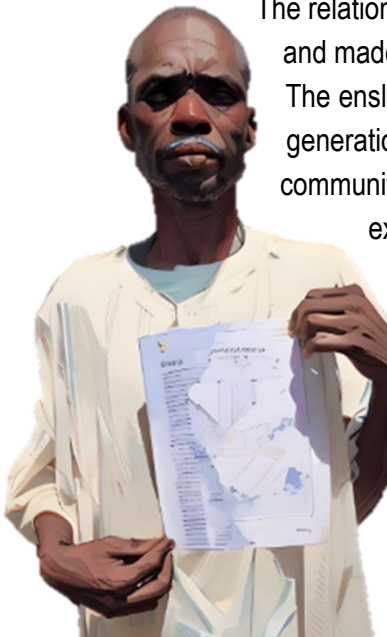


Figure 3 CSI project manager Franco Majok with lists of South Sudanese men and women freed from slavery in the Arab north

The relationships between families, clans, and subtribes of Nuer and Dinka have especially been shaped and made more intense by both people's historical relationship with their Arab neighbours to the north. The enslavement of Nuer and Dinka by Arabs of Sudan and Libya continues even today and the past generational practice of being enslaved has contributed a powerful psychosocial traumatisation of community that has been transmitted generationally over the course of many generations. This helps explain thought, emotion, and behaviour within Dinka and Nuer societies that would otherwise appear to be irrational. Sudanese Arabs have been practicing slavery with African tribes for centuries and the practice continues to this day. In Sudan's Arab culture, the use of African men, women, and children as forced servitude in domestic, factory, and farming roles is not widely condemned and certainly not enforced by civil authorities, even when a civil war is not ongoing. Sudan has always been dominated by a light-skinned, Arabic-speaking elite, while black Africans in the south and west of the country have faced discrimination and marginalisation. It is common for newspapers to publish racial slurs, including the word "slave". Almost all media outlets in Sudan describe petty criminals in the capital, Khartoum, as "negros" as they are perceived to be poor and not ethnically Arab. Racism is insidious in Sudan, and modern slavery persists unopposed. The practice was officially abolished in 1924, but the decision faced strong resistance from the main Arab and Islamic leaders of that era. 21st Century slave raids into Southern Sudan continued as a

documented practice until 2005, when the south achieved its independence from Khartoum. Thereafter, slave raiding continued, albeit as an informal practice. In 2021, Christian Solidarity International (CSI) orchestrated the release of several large groups of slaves, often through purchasing their freedom.⁹ CSI project manager Franco Majok was in South Sudan to oversee the second slave liberation action of the year that concluded on May 22 and 23. Over the two days 150 former slaves returned to Aweil North County and the same number to Aweil East County, close to the border with Sudan. All those freed – 183 women and 117 men – received a goat, a survival kit, a hoe for farming, 20 kg of sorghum and 20

⁸ (Christian, 2013a, 2018)

⁹ (CSI Staff, 2021)



kg of groundnuts. The amount of food provided was higher than usual on account of the current risk of hunger in South Sudan. A medical team provided treatment to one third of the returnees for various illnesses and injuries. *“There were no issues, and everything went well”,* a relieved Franco reported following the slave liberation. *“People were so happy.”*¹⁰

The phenomenological experience of being a slave creates a damaged (traumatic) reality. Being a slave fractures the mind’s belief in its individual agency – the “I-Am” of a person’s Sentient-Self. Former and currently enslaved people, pass this fractured (traumatised) individual agency, unknowingly, to their children and grandchildren with every word, story, lesson, and physical behaviour. Dinka and Nuer families and individuals who suffer from experiences of being enslaved in their present life, experience complex and compounded trauma that leaves them with a deformed understanding of their existence. Central to the deformed psychological reality that enslavement creates is the victimised mind’s estimation of its alienation from its own personhood, self-love, and self-worth. For this type of traumatised person, its ability to meet (live up to, conform to) the expected archetypes of male masculinity and female femininity are in question. Nuer and Dinka persons thus traumatised by intense alienation from self-worthiness, live in cycles of intense shame. Their personality displays range between humble-submission to shamed-rage, with little space in-between. One interviewee I call ‘Marial’, describes his understanding of his life as being under continuous threat of violence other tribes because of cattle raiding and communal violence created by the animosity of South Sudan’s political system in Juba. Marial is a member of the Dinka people but notice how he speaks of the emotional warfare between Dinka and Nuer. Notice how Marial perceives what is happening, but he is unable to explain the psychosocial drivers of According to Marial:



Figure 4 South Sudan’s ethnic youth engaging in violent outplay after generations of civil war and extreme communal violence approaching levels of ethnic cauterisation of resistance to domination.

...we have conflict us and Mourleen [Merle] tribe and we keep fighting each other, they take away our cows and then we in retaliation take their cows and then after 20 days of this they took the children and they trained them then they come to take our cows and then I didn’t like this behaviour and I left this tribe come to us and take the children ten years old, and take them to their tribe the Mourleen [Merle] tribe ... we fight with other tribes so whenever they come to fight or attack us whether day or night if they kill people and they have children under 15 they take them with you and the cows and go on abducting them until 17/18 years [of age] tell them they need to fight. [How are Dinka people treated in South Sudan?] ... some people ... The Nuer tribe ... they treat them [Dinka] in racist manner, because there are loads of problems there ... [the Merla tribe] this is a tribe beside us, and they take our cows and we take theirs in revenge ... there [is] trouble [between] the Dinka [and the other tribes] there are 63 tribes ... because of the president, the problem is president and he is [from the] Dinka tribe because president is not listening to them [other tribes] he only listens to Dinka tribe ... but we also have problems amongst ourselves (Dinka tribe). [Claimant fears] the government, and the [country is] full of troubles. [Marial says he fears the government because of] the government fighting ... they will involve me in their troubles, if you reach 17 they will force you to join gov [SPLA Army] after 17 you go to war ... if you reach 27y.o [Marial means 17-years-of-age] they will take you away and you join them and then they send you to

¹⁰ (CSI Staff, 2021)



fight especially if you're from our tribe as we are for biggest tribe in south, they will take you even if you have 3 or 4 brothers they will take them as well. [Marial, who is in exile, believes that if he returns to South Sudan] they will imprison me and hang me ... because I left the country.

Marial's narrative illustrates a phenomenological perspective of boys and young people in South Sudan's post-civil war environment, where the violence continues even after political parties have reconciled. The sections below describe this post-war conflict environment in detail, explaining the drivers of the violence and the inhibitors of successful resolution.

§A1.2 African – Arab Civil War in West Sudan.

In Darfur, the civil conflict is even now spilling over into Chad's Ouaddai highlands and its Lake Fitr regions, home to most of its African Muslim agricultural tribes. What little progress had been made with establishing protected areas under the autonomous control of the Sudan Liberation Army, was lost when the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) overthrew its civilian government and established a military dictatorship. After mass civil protests in Khartoum threatened to reverse the coup de état, the general in command of the SAF, Abdel-Fattah al-Burhan, enlisted the assistance of its shadowy "Rapid Response Force" to quell the public discord. The Rapid Response Force, or RSF, was/is the organisational and operational command headquarters of the notorious and infamous Arab militia that is widely known as the "Janjaweed".¹¹ Its members are drawn from Bedouin Baggara and Abbala tribes, and are responsible for genocide and ethnic cleansing in Sudan's Darfur region and Chad's Ouaddai highlands region.¹² The assistance that the SAF requested of the RSF was that they quash civilian resistance in as ruthless a manner as needed to put down the threat to the military regime.¹³ After the RSF accomplished this, its commanding general decided that this service should come with a price; a seat at the governing table for the RSF as an equal to the SAF. As a guarantee of his request, the RSF occupied strategic portions of the capital of Khartoum, which escalated into a full-scale civil war that quickly spread to the RSF's home regions of western Sudan. The continuing civil conflicts in Darfur, combined with the new civil war in Khartoum, helped to destabilise the post-independence accords between Khartoum and Juba, South Sudan.

§A1.3 African – Arab Civil War in South Sudan.

In South Sudan, the respected leader of its revolution and independence, Dr. John Garang, died in a suspicious helicopter crash in 2005, leaving a leadership void that was never successfully filled. Garang was a member of the majority Dinka tribe, leading the entire coalition of South Sudan's 60 or tribes in rebellion against the Arab Sudanese north. Dr. Garang's only internal rival for leadership of the SPLA/M was an ambitious member of the Nuer people and son of a tribal chief named Riek Machar Teny Dhurgon. He joined Garang's SPLA/M rebel group in 1984, fighting for southern independence during the Second Sudanese Civil War. Within a few years, Machar began struggling with Garang over direction and control of the rebel movement. He was ejected from Garang's SPLA/M in 1991 after exploiting (pre-existing) ethnic rivalries between the Nuer



Figure 5 SPLM/A, SLA/M, RSF, SAF

¹¹ The Rapid Support Forces (RSF; Arabic: قوات الدعم السريع, romanized: Quwwāt ad-da'm as-sarī') is a paramilitary force formerly operated by the Government of Sudan. The RSF grew out of, and is primarily composed of, the Janjaweed militias which previously fought on behalf of the Sudanese government. Its actions in Darfur qualify as crimes against humanity in the opinion of Human Rights Watch. RSF has been administered by the National Intelligence and Security Service, while during military operations it has been commanded by the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF).

¹² (Elbagir, 2024)

¹³ (Gallopín & Osman, 2023)



and Dinka people ostensibly to further his Nuer agenda. In reality, Sudan's President Omar Bashir, provided adroit interference in encouraging the split between Garang and Machar, and later, between Garang's successor (Salva Kiir) and Machar. With alliance of the Shiluk tribe, Machar then founded his own SPLA splinter group called SPLA-Nasir, which later in 1991, conducted a massacre of 2,000 Dinka civilians in the Dinka town of Bor. This massacre quickly became a 'cultural trauma' for the Dinka that would be revenged in later years. Over the next several years, Machar led several different rebel groups and militias, including the SPLA-United, the South Sudan Independence Movement/Army (SSIM/A), the South Sudan Defence Forces (SSDF) and the Sudan People's Defense Forces/Democratic Front (SPDF), before reuniting with Garang and the SPLM/A in 2002.



Figure 6: South Sudan's Ethnic Distribution

Machar's reunion with Garang's SPLA/M was opposed by some segments of the Nuer population or at least some Nuer leaders, illustrating that Machar was not an architect of Nuer conflict with Dinka, merely a symptom of what already existed.¹⁴ Following the successful conclusion of the Second Sudanese Civil War in 2005 against Khartoum, Machar was made Vice President of the Southern Sudan Autonomous Region with Garang's successor Salva Kiir Mayardit as President. Following the South's gaining of independence in 2011, Machar became Vice President of the independent republic of South Sudan with Kiir as President. After only three years of working together, the Dinka/Kiir president and the Nuer/Machar vice-presidency fell apart. Amidst allegations and counter-allegations, Kiir fired Machar from his position as vice-president and civil war ensued, but this time, between African Dinka and African Nuer.¹⁵ The relationship between Dinka Salva Kiir and Nuer Reik Machar, in many ways, is reflective of the relationship between Dinka and Nuer in general. Physically and archetypally, neither one is anathema to the other. The two peoples intermarry, share similar facial and body features. Children grow up Dinka-Nuer in their individual identities without discomfort, as the two-family historical narratives of agricultural and pastoral life-cycles are deeply intertwined.¹⁶ South Sudan descended into a violent civil war at the end of 2013 that has, in many respects, continued to the present.

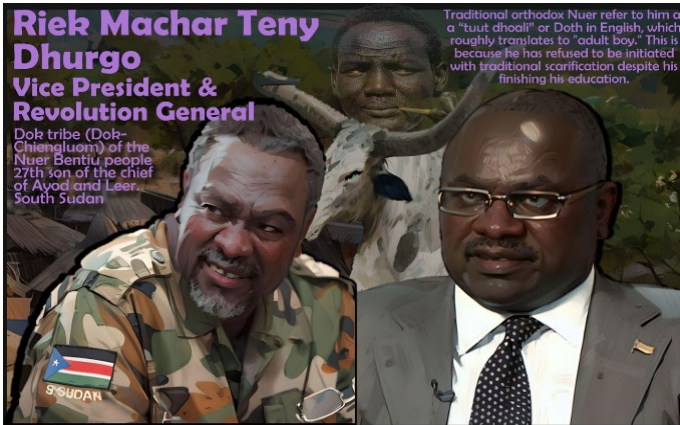
§A1.4 African Civil War: SPLM/A versus SPLM/A-in-opposition.

In the months leading up to the conflict in July of 2013, President Salva Kiir and Vice President Reik Machar had been in heated disagreement on several issues. Both were disturbed over the course of the fledgling South Sudan government and under pressure from their respective constituencies over a growing divide in Dinka and Nuer societies between their respective agricultural (farming and cattle) base and each communities growing educated younger generations that were piling up in Juba, Bor, and other urbanising areas. The government ministries were ill equipped to manage the post war changes and the growing divide over uneducated farmer and educated student-worker agitating for greater integration into the globalising east African economy. The traditional farmers and cattle herders, meanwhile, suffered from loss of

¹⁴ (Daldorph, 2016; Johnson, 2014)

¹⁵ (Joselow, 2013; Warner, 2013)

¹⁶ (F. Deng, 2011; Glickman, 1972)



their central position in Dinka and Nuer social life as the focus shifted to the newly educated in the Urban centres.¹⁷ The wars of psychological identity politics waged by Khartoum, moreover, continued as conflict in the new state made it easier to retain or regain control over natural resources in the disputed areas between the two states of Sudan and South Sudan. Nearly 75% of Sudan's oil reserves are in the new state of South Sudan, a loss that Khartoum has been unable to reconcile. Sudan's government under Omar Bashir and General Abdel-Fattah al-Burhan, maintained a close connection to Juba, attending the ceremonies that swore Dinka Salva Kiir and Nuer Reik Machar into power in 2011, and again in 2016, despite having helped shape and amplify each other's mutual fears of each other.¹⁸ The event that sparked the 2013 civil war involved Kiir's presidential guards (Dinka), disarming Machar's vice-presidential guards (Nuer) over fears of a planned coup.¹⁹ Where Salva Kiir's fears of this came from, are only speculation, but rumours swirled that Khartoum's psychological warfare machine had been in play again, with coaching and support from its growing ally, Moscow

and Russian Federation President Vladimir Putin. Earlier that year, in February 2013, President Kiir had quietly retired most of the former high-ranking Nuer officers who had served under him during the war with Sudan.²⁰ Regardless of the reason, "Machar escaped from Juba, and, amid reports over the next few days of targeted killings of Nuer in Juba by men in uniform loyal to the President, the commanders of the 8th and 4th army divisions of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) in Jonglei and Unity states announced their defection to Riek Machar and seized control of the state capitals of Bor and Bentiu."²¹ International condemnation of the actions of both leaders was uniform, and Kiir was called on to release the alleged coup plotters, who were arrested and held without evidence, especially the widow of the independence leader, John Garang, Madame Rebecca Nyanding de Mabior. Mass arrests followed, with dozens of SPLM leaders and government ministers detained in the campaign. The arrests coincided with a meeting of the National Liberation Council (the movement's highest military and political authority), during which Kiir harshly attacked Machar and his group, causing members to walk out in protest. Thereafter, there were rumours of Machar's arrest and a group of his supporters in the National Guard reacted by firing their guns in protest, triggering violent clashes. Over the following months, the relationship between Dinka and Nuer deteriorated and the conflict spread with violence reaching back into communities

¹⁷ (Spaulding, 2024)

¹⁸ "Minutes of the Military and Security Committee Meeting held in the National Defense College [Khartoum]"; the meeting referred to took place on August 31, 2014 <http://sudanreeves.org/2014/09/28/khartoum-offers-strategic-military-support-to-rebels-in-south-sudan-spla-in-opposition-28-september-2014/>. 75% of all the former Sudan's oil reserves are in South Sudan. The region of Abyei still remains disputed and a separate referendum will be held in Abyei on whether they want to join Sudan or South Sudan. The South Kordofan conflict broke out in June 2011 between the Army of Sudan and the SPLA over the Nuba Mountains.

¹⁹ Salva Kiir's office believed at the time that the coup attempt was to have been led by former Vice-President Riek Machar and several ex-cabinet ministers and officials of the ruling Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), including Madame Rebecca Nyanding de Mabior, the widow of the SPLM's first leader, John Garang. Eleven alleged coup plotters were arrested in their homes, but Riek In telephone interviews from secure places Riek Machar denied that he had been involved in a coup but then urged the army to overthrow Salva Kiir and announced his plans to march on Juba. – Douglas Johnson.

²⁰ (Staff, 2013)

²¹ (Johnson, 2014)



Figure 8 The Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) Military and Security Committee supported, funded, and armed the 2013 – Present Civil War in South Sudan.

still recovering from the generational civil war between Arab and African. On December 15, 2013, clashes broke out between President Salva Kiir's forces and forces loyal to fired Vice President Riek Machar in Juba, South Sudan. Thousands of residents, mostly Nuer, were killed or injured, and the United Nations estimates nearly 200,000 were forced to flee. "Appalling crimes have been committed against civilians for no other reason than their ethnicity, [and] both sides need to leave civilians out of their conflict, let aid groups reach people who need help and accept a credible, independent investigation into these crimes."²² The Nuer massacre, which occurred from December 15 to December 18, 2013, appeared to many to be a well-organized, intentional mass killing perpetrated against thousands of Nuer civilians by Dinka SPLA soldiers, the Presidential Guard - Tiger Division, and Mathiang Anyoor (Dut Ku Beny), who was alleged to have been supported by Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF).²³ The ousted vice president Reik Machar claimed that the massacre had been orchestrated by the President of the Republic of South Sudan Salva Kiir Mayardit, with support of the Jieng Council of Elders (JCE), and Dinka high-ranking military generals within the SPLA army in Juba. More than 47,000 Nuer civilians were massacred in four days

Sudan Government Planning Meeting to instigate and support the South Sudan Civil War, Saturday, August 31st, 2014, Sudan's National Defense College, extracts from "Minutes of the Military & Security Committee Meeting."

"We must change the balance of forces in South Sudan. Riak, Taban and Dhieu Mathok came and requested support in the areas of training in [Military Intelligence], and especially in Tanks and artillery. They requested armament also. They want to be given advanced weapons. *Our reply was that we have no objection, provided that we agree on a common objective.* Then we train and supply with the required weapons. For sure we will benefit from their discourse. 1st Lt. Gen. Hashim Abdalla Mohammed, Chief of Joint General Staff, page 16)

"The people of South Sudan must accept ... the buffer zone ... If they refuse, *we can deal with them in a manner that suits the threat they pose to us.* I met Riak, Dhieu and Taban and they are regretting the decision to separate the South and we decided to return his house to him. *He requested us to assist him and that he, has shortage in the [Military Intelligence] personnel, operations command, and tank technicians. We must use the many cards we have against the South in order to give them unforgettable lesson*" (page 22 – 23). Lt. General (PSC) Imadadiin Adawi, Chief of Joint Operations

"The South is still supporting the rebels with the aim to change our government in Khartoum. In order to counter that danger, we are pre-empting them by a plan to infiltrate and empty the refugee camps [*in Unity State and Blue Nile State—ER*], recruit field commanders, and train the sons of the war affected areas to fight and defeat the rebellion [*by the SPLA-N—ER*]" (page 11).

Accordingly, *we must provide Riak forces with big support in order to wage the war against Juba and clean the whole of Greater Upper Nile area.*" Lt. General (PSC) Imadadiin Adawi, Chief of Joint Operations (page 14).

²² Daniel Bekele, Africa director at Human Rights Watch.

²³ (Mednick, 2019)



between December 15 and December 18, 2013.²⁴ The interview below seemed consistent across survivors and respondents. The statements attributed to the South Sudan government soldiers seemed a bit less consistent, and more in line with inflamed rhetoric that accompanies emotional ideations such as extreme victimisation, alienation, shame, betrayal, abandonment and rage.

"I was in Juba on December 15 when the soldiers came. Hour after hour after hour, all they did was kill people, until December 20. I will never forget it ... they were telling people go and rape your mother and your sister, and after you rape them then they will kill you. And they were telling people to eat the meat of your brother. And imagine, you are all South Sudanese together. If you have a mark [the Nuer have tribal scars across their foreheads] they will definitely kill you, because they know you are really Nuer. It was not all the Dinka. It was those from Warrap state. They say that [Nuer leader] Riek Machar killed people in Bor in 1991, and they decided that they were going to take their revenge. I was on the other side of the River Nile in the Gumbo area of Juba. If you tried to cross the river, they would just take you and put you inside the river, they would just kill you. They killed eight of my relatives. They just rounded them up and killed them. When I reached the bridge across the Nile, soldiers there asked me: 'Where are you going?' I told them: 'I'm going to Kakuma.' They told me: 'You want to escape?' I told them: 'No. I'm not going to escape!' They said: 'You are Nuer, we are going to kill you.' Fortunately, one of the security guards came and said: 'Let these people go.' I travelled together with some of the Nuer. Most of them were boys. They don't have marks. If you have no marks, sometimes it's an advantage."
- Juba Resident Gabriel Gatluak Dak Yau.²⁵

In the ensuing years, the death toll was revised upwards to be over 50,000 Nuer civilians as fighting rapidly engulfed the entire region of the Upper Nile. The Nuer massacre sparked a wave of widespread anger among the Nuer people in Jonglei, Upper Nile, and Unity States and the rise of recurrent revenge attacks against Dinka by the Nuer White

Army and the defected Nuer SPLA soldiers marked the beginning of the South Sudanese civil war. The conflict quickly spread to other areas of the country. Media outlets reported that Machar's forces had taken over Bor, the capital of Jonglei state; Bentiu, the capital of Unity state; and Malkal, the capital of the Upper Nile state – all strategic cities because they fall in oil-rich areas. While Kiir's forces took back Bor and Malkal, Malkal fell to Machar's forces again on December 31, 2013. The United Nations peacekeepers in the country as part of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) were largely ineffective in halting the civil war.²⁶ Numerous ceasefires were mediated by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) between the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) and SPLM – in opposition and were subsequently broken. A peace agreement was signed in Ethiopia under threat of United Nations sanctions for both sides in August 2015. Machar returned to Juba in 2016 and was reappointed vice president, only to be fired again by Salva Kiir following a second breakout of violence in Juba, and he again, fled the country as the conflict erupted

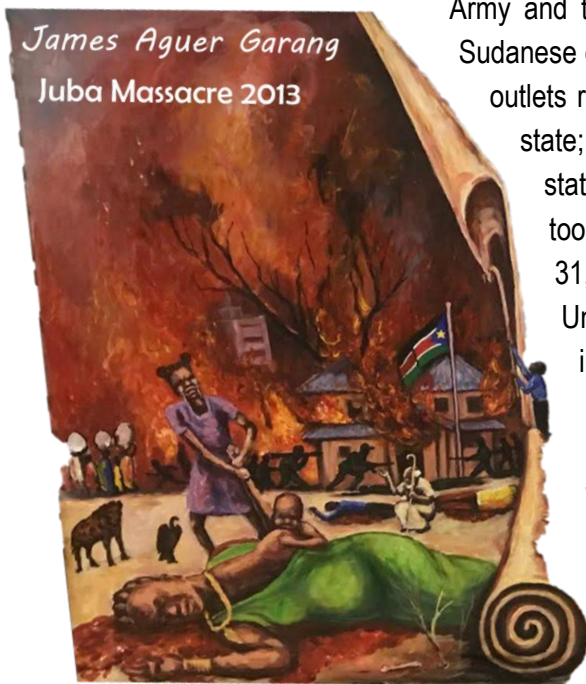


Figure 9

²⁴ (Naath (Nuer) Nation, 2018)

²⁵ (Mednick, 2019)

²⁶ (Daldorph, 2016; Wuol, 2024)



again.²⁷ Both the armed forces of the SPLM and the SPLM-in-opposition have had and continue to have, intense infighting that makes accountability difficult and mediation nearly impossible. In August 2018, another power-sharing agreement was tentatively agreed to, and a year and a half later, on 20 February 2020, Salva Kiir Mayardit and Riek Machar formed yet another national unity government as Machar was sworn in for the third time as the First Vice President of the country.²⁸ The intensity of the violence, combined with the active involvement of the Arab Government in Khartoum, created levels of psychosocial-emotional traumatising of entire families, villages, and tribes, that will not easily be resolved away from continuation. The United Nations human rights office has described



Figure 10 Children become soldiers because they are recruited, or because they have nowhere else to turn except to imitate their attackers.

the situation in the country as "one of the most horrendous human rights situations in the world".²⁹ US, EU, and UN officials have repeatedly accused the army and allied militias of allowing fighters to rape women as form of payment for fighting, as well as to normalise cattle raiding by encouraging young men to "do what you can, take what you can."³⁰ The scale of sexual violence during the full civil war in Sudan (2013, 2014, 2015, & 2016) was particularly shocking: in five months from April to September 2015, for example, the UN

recorded more than 1,300 reports of rape in just one of South Sudan's ten states, oil-rich Unity. Reports from NGOs and village elders stated that groups claiming to be allied to the Government were allowed to rape women in lieu of wages but opposition groups and criminal gangs have also been preying on women and girls.

*"The scale and types of sexual violence - primarily by Government SPLA forces and affiliated militia - are described in searing, devastating detail, as is the almost casual, yet calculated, attitude of those slaughtering civilians and destroying property and livelihoods," "However, the quantity of rapes and gang-rapes described in the report must only be a snapshot of the real total. This is one of the most horrendous human rights situations in the world, with massive use of rape as an instrument of terror and weapon of war -- yet it has been more or less off the international radar." UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein.*³¹

On 22 December 2017, at the conclusion of a 12-day visit to the region, the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan said, "Four years following the start of the current conflict in South Sudan, gross human rights violations continue to be committed in a widespread way by all parties to the conflict, in which civilians are bearing the brunt."³² Despite the official cessation of the civil war in 2020, violence between armed militia groups at the community level has continued in the country; according to Yasmin Sooka, Chair of the Commission of Human Rights in Sudan, the level of violence "far exceeds the violence between 2013 and 2019".³³ The armed Nuer and Dinka groups fighting each other during these

²⁷ (Johnson, 2014)
²⁸ (Daldorph, 2016; Johnson, 2014; Krause, 2019)
²⁹ (Associated Press, 2016)
³⁰ (Organisation, 2017; Organisation Staff, 2016)
³¹ (Organisation Staff, 2016)
³² (Alwihda Info, 2017)
³³ (Sooka, 2022)



past 11+ years were composed of military units that defected or remained loyal to Machar and Kiir respectively, and of armed civilian militias from the Dinka and Nuer regions of South Sudan. Often, it has been difficult in distinguishing between formal military forces and civilian armed militia or mobs, engaged in revenge attacks in retaliation for earlier incidents. Several times in 2015, an agreement between Nuer leader Machar and Dinka leader Kiir was reached, only to be broken by one side or the other's uncontrolled militias.³⁴ And this point, that the Nuer and Dinka political leaders no longer have control over their respective ethnic societies, is why the civil conflict in South Sudan continues to this day.

§A2 Conflict Drivers South Sudan: Collective Identity, Psychosocial Trauma, and Deformed Reality.

When scholars in developed western countries examine the causes of violent conflict in countries/communities that are struggling with adaptation to global integration, post-colonial reconciliation, and the legacies of generational transmission of trauma, they are often stymied in their analysis. This is why our research, and reporting focuses heavily on the psychosocial aspects of the drivers of violence in countries of high levels of refugee outflows. Western chauvinism naturally assumes that the constructed societies of developed nations of Europe and North America are preferable to social construction in Africa, Mesoamerica, Asia, the Levant, and Arabia. In practice, however, I find as a field researcher an innate reluctance to leave the psychogeography/geology of homelands, even to the point of acceptance of death from either natural or manmade disasters. Those who do flee into exile to avoid extermination, are like the canaries in the coal mine, causing us to focus on sudden changes to the psychosocial-security situations of a particular country. The conflict drivers that push indigenous peoples into exile against all normal reason, are often opaque and must be illustrated and described across complex cultural, linguistic, and psychosocial phenomenological realities. The next several subsections illustrate these drivers of violent conflict and help us to understand what refugees seeking asylum are actually speaking about.

§A2.1 Collective Identity.

Much of the literature relating to the conflicts in Sudan, focus on individual and large group identity as a central factor, which is an issue commonly associated with genocide.³⁵ In 2014, I was asked to brief the deputy commanding general of the United States Africa Command (USAFRICOM) on the situation in South Sudan. At the time, I was in the field in northern Mali and Niger, interviewing and engaging the Arab, Tuareg, and African tribes caught up in the violent extremist attacks there. Returning to Stuttgart, Germany to brief Lt. General Steven Hummer, I was asked if the conflict in South Sudan, which was in full swing, would likely become genocidal.³⁶ My response was no. I explained to General Hummer, and my boss, Special Operations Command Africa chief, Major General Jim Linder, that genocide is an irrational act, driven by collapsing individual and large group identity. The violence between Arab and African in Sudan (west and south) was driven by a specific pathology in the sedentary and nomadic pastoralist (Bedouin) Arabs' malformed large group identity. I explained that Sudan's Arab's needed to believe in their 'Arab-ness' to the degree that they would take violent actions against anyone or thing that reduced their 'feelings of Arab-ness'.³⁷ At its core, genocide is, I explained to General Hummel, about a collective group's inability to achieve a sufficient degree of self-love to sustain their psychosocial survival. When, a community's belief (in itself) as a worthwhile phenotype/archetype is interfered with (in perception, not reality), intense alienation-shame-rage can drive the population to become

³⁴ (Naath (Nuer) Nation, 2018)

³⁵ (Christian, 2011; Idris, 2005; Lesch, 1998)

³⁶ In 2010, the CIA issued a warning that "over the next five years ... a new mass killing or genocide is most likely to occur in southern Sudan."

³⁷ This allowed other Arab nations from the Arabian Peninsula, to manipulate Khartoum's Arab government for their own purposes, such as joining the Saudi led Arab army against the Houthis in Yemen.



vulnerable to irrational solutions to an irrational illness; that they must remove the thought-producing-entity that caused the loss of self-love. In the case of Rwanda, the majority Hutu segment attempted to eliminate the minority Tutsi population segment. The problem was that the attributes of the Tutsi people were artificially amplified recessive genetic traits that were and are present in all Hutu peoples. This means that a Hutu appearing couple could give birth to a Tutsi appearing baby and vice versa. The Arabs of Sudan, who were killing the Arabized African peoples of the

Naath Jieng Nuer Dinka



Figure 11 Nuer and Dinka tribal custodial markings of adulthood.

Zaghawa, Masalit, Maba, and, to a lesser extent, Fur, had to ask their nominal enemies their family names before they could decide if they were a threat to their Arab-ness. This is because over the centuries of intermarriage, their phenotypes were nearly identical. Sudan and Chad's Arabized Africans rejected that their (nearly co-ethnic) Arabs were, in fact, Arab, as their skin colouring and facial features were as much or more African than Arab. For Sudan's Arabs, being an African people meant/means that their forebears were slaves, rather than slave-owners, and that they were not descended from the Prophet Mohammed. Three journal articles cited here will explain in detail, the explicit psychosocial pathology of identity conflict and its relation to genocide, and the relationship between Islam, Arab, and society.³⁸ Continuing with my explanation to General Hummer, in the case of South Sudan's Dinka majority and Nuer, the two tribes possess sufficient

levels of a 'collective-self' identity, that neither tribe threatens the identity of the other. Historically, members of the larger Dinka tribe, would be absorbed into the smaller Nuer tribe without overly destructive violent outplay. The two peoples share nearly identical outward phenotypes and archetypes, enough so that without seeing the each other's cultural face and body scarification, it can be difficult for either Dinka or Nuer to know who each other is. Physical scarification is known as 'custodial marks' of the tribe that possesses responsibility of the individual and their family. Facial scarification is practiced among many ethnic groups in South Sudan, and various marks across the faces of tribesmen gives identity to the tribe and give beauty to women. Members of the Dinka tribe in South Sudan scar their faces with three parallel vertical lines across the forehead in a rugged display of courage to the tribe, whereas the Nuer custodial marks are three parallel horizontal lines as illustrated in **figure 11**. The markings are common initiation patterns that indicate adulthood and acceptance of tribal responsibilities. Internally and between each other, the Nuer refer to themselves as Naath and the Dinka refer to themselves as Jieng. Since both terms mean 'people', the distinction between them is in part a question of linguistic differentiation. Some historical records suggest that the much smaller, though expansive, population of Naath may have emerged from a pre-existing population of early Jieng, breaking away from earlier cultural identity, fighting for physical and cultural space to grow. Studies of Nuer and Dinka cultural expression supports this depiction, assigning the Naath people as better fighters and cattle raiders as part of their social organisation and trait valuation. Alternative theories are that the Nuer/Naath emerged from the Luo peoples who predated the Dinka/Jieng by several centuries. All scholars agree that historical conflict between these two closely related Nilotic neighbours existed. However, the relationship between them is an enduring mystery and even the Jieng and Naath do not agree on issues of ethnic origination or underlying reasons for historical tribal conflicts and friendships. The two peoples of Nuer/Naath and Dinka/Jieng are quite similar in nearly all regards, with collectives of Naath and Jieng being more like one another than to other ethnic tribes in South Sudan.³⁹ Nuer-Dinka social and cultural life blends easily together in spaces of non-violence. Both are characterised as agro-pastoral, and cattle, cows,

³⁸ (Christian, 2013b, 2016)(Sharkey, 2007)

³⁹ (Southall, 1976)



Figure 13 *Origin of Death*. Oil on Canvas, 2005 by Atem Aleu. The artist alludes to a well-known story from Dinka mythology. In ancient times, the earth and the sky were so close that they were linked by a single rope; anyone who died could ascend the rope to be reborn. A woman cultivating more than her share of grain killed a baby bird, causing the bird's mother to sever the rope in revenge, bringing true death into the world. At the same time, the bird cutting the rope also signifies the enduring hope for peace: in the midst of pain and privation visions of hope and regeneration endure.

play a central role in their personal, family, and cultural identity. They grow vegetables and grains such as millet. However, they primarily raise and herd cattle. The herding of cattle is central to many aspects of Nuer and Dinka life. Every Dinka male is given an ox by his father, uncle or whoever is responsible for him. His 'bull-name' like other Dinka names also derive from colour of their cattle and a girl (Ayen, Yar, etc.) or a boy (Mayom, Mayen, Malith, etc.) could be named after the colour of the best ox (mayom, malith, mayen) or cow (ayen, yar) that was given in marriage by the father. Both communities have large vocabularies for cattle, their colours and take great interest and pride in the art of making different conformations to which their horns can be trained to grow.⁴⁰ When discussing, debating about anything or in a dance, a Dinka or Nuer usually throws up his arms in imitation of the shape of the horns of an ox. A common belief in both communities is that the spirits of the deceased loved ones reside in the great horns of their cattle. The cow's human guardian rubs the horns into brilliant finishes which serves to calm and nature the spirits of the deceased and make room for those yet to join them in the spirit world.⁴¹ The Nuer tribe worships Kwoth, a creator god, while the Dinka tribe worships Nhialic, also a supreme creator. They also believe in the existence of Earth, Rain, and Sky Spirits and practice ancestor worship. However, some members of the Naath/Nuer and Jiang/Dinka communities have also converted to Christianity and Islam, and these religions coexist with traditional beliefs without undue dissonance. With the generational civil war against their Arab north, and against each other, both peoples have learned a great deal about the

practice of violent conflict.⁴² Another aspect of South Sudan's African tribal identities is their development under metacontrast against a dominant and oppressive Arab north. Historically, Arab slave traders raided Dinka and Nuer villages, creating shared victimisation and suffering against a common enemy.⁴³ Previous inter-tribal grievances were obviated by existential threats from an outside enemy. Tribal identities of Dinka, Nuer, Shilluk, Bari, and others coalesced and condensed in the face of an enemy other that threatened extinction of their meta-identities of African, agrarian, black, and tribal personhoods.⁴⁴ This is how metacontrast in social psychology works. The southern tribes before the war possessed no overarching identity as

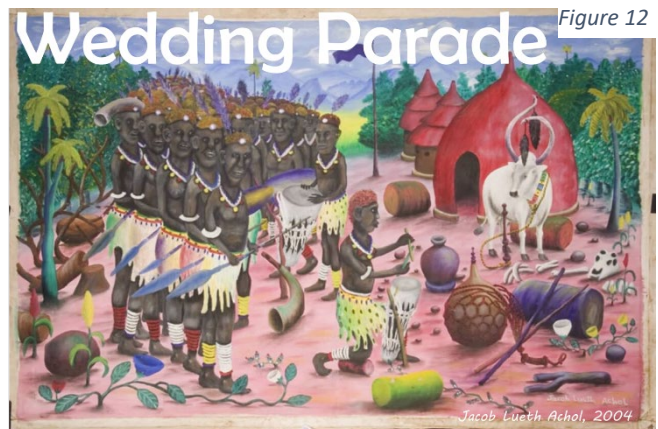


Figure 12

⁴⁰ (Evans-Pritchard, 2023; Ground Truth Solutions, 2023; Johnson, 1982; Nyombe, 1994)

⁴¹ This one small piece of cultural knowledge can help explain the searing emotional impact of cattle raiding on the Dinka and Nuer tribes that help inflame intercommunal violence.

⁴² (Ruta, 2013)

⁴³ (Pinaud, 2021; Staff, 2016)

⁴⁴ (Beswick, 2019; Southall, 1976)



a state or nation. The communal struggle against Arab domination and cleansing forged a skeletal structure that could become the basis of a future new national identity.⁴⁵

“The fact remains that the unity formed in South Sudan during the fight against the North was simply tribal leaders joining ranks in rebellion against a common enemy. As soon as the binding reason disappeared, the ties became weaker and tribal alignments emerged within the ranks of the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA), an army housing dozens of armed factions representing tribes such as the Dinka, Nuer, Shilluk, Mandari, Barya and Acholi.”⁴⁶

The nature of Khartoum’s war against its African south focused on the psychological component as much as the physical.



Figure 14 Polarisation of Tribal Identity

The war attacked the foundations of African tribal identity, pitting one against the other, even as the one Arab attacked the several Africans. The net result was that, even at the conclusion of hostilities and the gain of independence, the removal of the metacontrast enemy-other, the tribes within were unable to maintain any sense of unity they had forged during the war. The Sudan People’s Liberation Army remained, and the Movement simply became a political party, within which, old tribal feuds from before and during the war, resurfaced in all the emotional intensity but amplified by the removal of an outer threat consideration.

The military was supposed to vanish gradually from the political scene, transitioning the country from a revolution to a state with civilian politicians. However, there remains no firm commitment to this objective, and many politicians in South Sudan have only retained their position due to their military capabilities.”⁴⁷

Instead, the military leaders of the SPLA became the political leaders of the SPLM, retaining their psychosocial imprinting of lifetimes of war as guerrilla leaders, surviving only through the exercise of hyper-vigilance, hyper-arousal, suspicion rather than trust, rejection of compromise, and over reliance on a strict hierarchical change of command that tolerated little dissent. The SPLA’s Dinka majority’s continuation of wartime social organisation in the fledgling government created resentment within the Nuer half of the government that tainted even the positive aspects of cooperation. Nuer communities reflected this resentment in a number of ways that infuriated the Dinka communities that attempted to collaborate. Funding

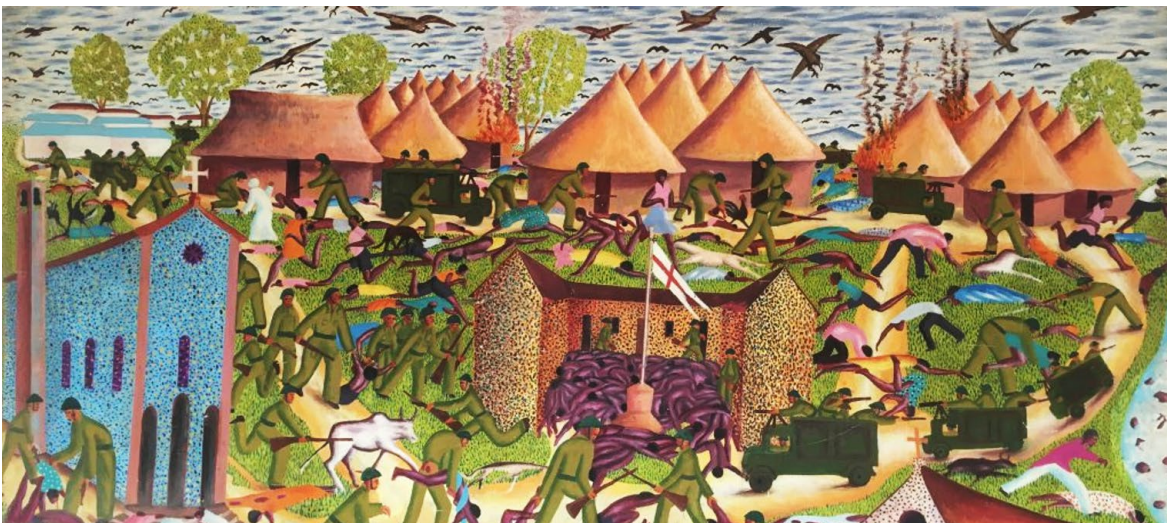


Figure 15 Memorialisation of Massacres: depiction of the 1965 Juba massacre

⁴⁵ (Organisational, 2020; The Dinka-Nuer Conflict and the Ensuing Humanitarian Crisis in South Sudan, n.d.)

⁴⁶ (Al Jazeera Center for Studies, 2014)

⁴⁷ (Al Jazeera Center for Studies, 2014)



projects from Juba to desperate Nuer communities, for instance, sparked the use of a derogatory term 'Nuer weu', which translates to 'Nuer of Dinka money', creating shame for being dependent, a reaction that was not shared by Dinka communities receiving the same assistance.

§A2.2 Psychosocial Trauma from Enslavement, Civil War, and Inter-Ethnic Violence.

The indigenous painting in **figure 15**, memorialises the 1965 Juba massacres by Sudan's Arab Army. The portrait depicts clothed, armed, and powerful Arab soldiers herding, capturing, and killing South Sudan's agrarian-pastoralist farmers, who have neither weapons nor ability to protect themselves. The painter depicts the invaders in terms of modern vehicles, weapons, buildings, and organisation. Oppositionally, the painter depicts the tribespeople as terrified, unprepared, and defenseless. The African tribal army of the SPLM/A that arose in response to such massacres, fought back by adapting to their enemy. Adopting their enemy's modern vehicles, weapons, buildings, and organisation to push back their tormentors. In this way, Dinka and Nuer tribal men were able to adapt to modern warfare to defeat their enemy. But not all peoples of the tribes adapted in this way, only those men and women who were able and willing to take up arms against the north. As the South's 'People's Liberation' political movement and army grew and matured in capability, they changed, generationally. This means that, the men and women who built the SPLM/A, adapted their psychological identities and sociological organisations to defend the larger collectives against an even larger enemy. These changes in their psychology and sociology, were not reflected or copied by the remainder of the society. The rest of the tribal societies in South Sudan suffered heavily at the guns and swords of the Arab invaders, inducing traumatised realities of family, society, and safety. But those members who took up arms and political/social mobilisation against the Arab north, changed the most, if only to survive. Those who staffed the SPLM/A had to reduce their reliance on an external (family-village based) locus of control that is characteristic of sociocentric society. They were forced by necessity, to learn to use and rely on an internal locus of control that is characteristic of egocentric (modern-constructed) societies. As the war dragged on over decades, generations of young men and women adapted, changed, and joined the SPLM/A resistance (a minority of the whole), while generations of young men and women remained at the village, seeking to protect and survive against all the violence – physical, societal, psychological, and cultural. When the war ended, those in the SPLM/A were often

strangers to their ethnic kin, despite having created a democracy where those who remained in the village would be the majority electorate that would decide who would lead them; how they would lead; and what direction they would work towards. The SPLM was transformed into a political party that was used to elect the military leaders of the SPLA into positions of president and vice president, political offices rather than military commands. The reality was that, regardless of their offices, President Salva Kiir and Vice President Reik Machar, remained the same guerilla fighters that they had grown up as and perceived everything through acculturated lenses of security,

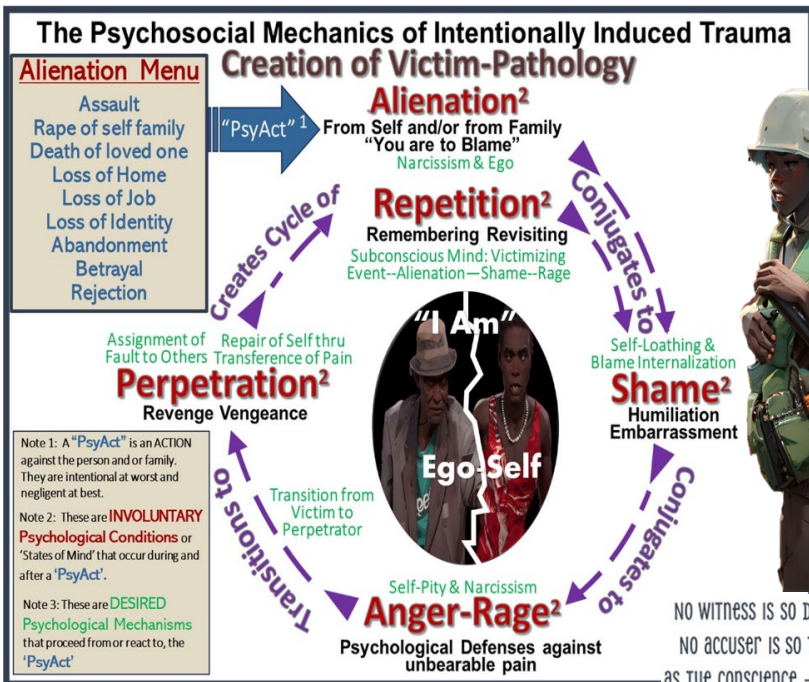


Figure 16 Depiction of the psychosocial mechanics of intentionally induced trauma



enemy, objectives, hierarchy, structure, and order. This change in the psychological organisation of the elected and appointed members of the SPLM, became a profound gap in relationships between the ‘front-office’ of government and the back-room of tribal society. Many men and women who had fought in the Arab/African civil war and returned home to ethnic village with injuries, both physical and psychological. They also brought home the know-how to handle weapons and defend their home, family, and village against external threats, both real and imaginary. And many of these returnees were only children, pressed into desperate service to stave off immediate defeat or resist the murder, rape, and plunder of villages one side of the war or the other.⁴⁸ Child soldiers and traumatised adults in South Sudan are often both victims and perpetrators. The graphic in **figure 16** illustrates this dynamic which underlies why the conflict in South Sudan continues despite Kiir and Machar’s political reproachment. In the diagram, external events damage the victim’s mind, such as assault, rape of self, family, death of a loved one, loss of their home to intentionally set fires, and so on. This ‘victimisation’ conjugates to alienation which in turn conjugates to shame, rage, and involuntary impulses to strike back. At some point, the traumatised victim-turned perpetrator (via revenge) loses track of their place in the cycle. They feel alienation, shame, and rage, and revenge temporarily eases the psychological and emotional pain.⁴⁹ The cycles of violence in South Sudan have left the “whole country traumatised” and in a state of communal disintegration.⁵⁰ Nuer

father and victim, Nhil Goy was a resident of Juba when President Salva Kiir fired his Nuer Vice President Reik Machar in 2013. The violence that followed, arrived at Nhil’s house on the morning of December 16th, when Dinka soldiers or irregular militia, slit the throat of his precocious five-year-old boy Peter, who died instantly in front of his parents. A few minutes later, the killers shot Nhil and Peter’s mother, Nyabiey Ruon. Despite being shot several times, Nhil survived and crawled to the street where passersby brought him to an NGO medical clinic. Nyabiey died of her wounds a few



Figure 17 Depiction of psychosocial trauma on family and village life

hours after the attack. Nhil told the clinic staff that “I am here to seek medical attention for my gunshot wounds ... My son and wife were killed in Juba. My only hope was shattered by Salva Kiir”, He stated that he was waiting for his wounds to heal so that he could join the fight against South Sudan’s government, saying, “I am willing to fight against the person who took the lives of my wife and son.”⁵¹ **Figure 17** illustrates the sequelae or symptoms of the levels of psychosocial trauma found in nearly every village and town in South Sudan. At all levels of generational life, children, parents and grandparents present symptoms of hypervigilance, mistrust, suspicion, fears of abandonment and betrayal.⁵² Family

⁴⁸ (Christian, 2019; Demos, 2018)
⁴⁹ (Christian, 2006, 2013b)
⁵⁰ (Baxter, 2021; Mednick, 2019)
⁵¹ (Baxter, 2021; Mednick, 2019)
⁵² (Christian, 2013c; Staff, 2024)



members are prone to feeling helpless and hopeless, preferring avoidance and withdrawal instead of normal healthy interpersonal relationships. Endless hyperarousal brings on depression followed by domestic violence, especially against women and children; those least able to resist. Problems with crops and livestock become existential in their immediacy, leading to sudden outbursts of violence. None of this is specific only to the Dinka, Nuer, and other African tribes of South Sudan.⁵³ This is the foundation of intractable conflict that continues long after the original political-military issue has been resolved. This type of psychosocial trauma eats away at indigenous family, village, and tribal governance, leaving communities unable to adapt to the changes around them, even if there were conditions of peace. The late-age teenagers and young adults of every village possess malformed personalities (expressions of individual identities) from constant exposure to violent outplay from their earliest memories. Concepts of love, nurture, play, and healthy interpersonal relationships are corrupted.

“They don’t see sticks; they don’t see people wrestling. What they see is just the gun fights. It is what they see from their fathers, it is what they see from their elders, and it is going to be much worse if we don’t find a way to control this existing age set. “From what we have seen in our current generation, in the near future we are going to have an even worse generation than this,” says Alexander. The new generation has seen a lot of bloodshed already. Peter Mothi, peace engagement advisor in South Sudan.⁵⁴



Figure 18 Children grow up in traumatised villages with malformed ideas of play, guns, fighting, and love.

The South Sudanese social and political leaders responsible for building a viable future through the development of their younger generations are themselves, deeply traumatised, and have shown an inability to overcome their trauma symptoms of suspicion, betrayal, mistrust, and so on, regarding the other tribal ethnicities that constitute the new state. Minor altercations in daily life between Dinka and Nuer become magnified through the lenses of past atrocities as both sides psychologically await the next expected mass attack on their insufficiently protected village. The Councils of Elders for both Jieng (Dinka) and Naath (Nuer) recognise the damage that their communities have suffered and the growing intractability of the conflict in South Sudan. While the ‘front-office’ of the political structure in Juba wrestles with power sharing between the tribal alliances of the SPLM and the SPLM-in-opposition, South Sudan’s populations are in a state of disintegration psychologically, sociologically, and physically. As one recent council of elders wrote in 2021 in a letter to the government titled, ‘Breaking the Silence’:

“The Country seems to be heading for another war and as elders and senior citizens, we do not want to witness another bloodshed in the country. Our people have had enough of the suffering ... [the government attention] is overly focused on power sharing among the parties and less about peace among the people of South Sudan. [the government’s plans] lack credibility when it comes to building peace at the local level ... addressing grassroots issues such as communal violence, cattle raiding and mundane gun criminality... this fractures the country more...”

Jieng Council of Elders, 19 February 2021.



Figure 19 Seal of Jieng Council of Elders

The destruction of family and village, made worse by the loss of tens of thousands of husbands and fathers in the decades of war, has left South Sudan society particularly dangerous, especially for the vulnerable population segments. Women and children in South Sudan are experiencing a protection crisis. Prolonged conflict, insecurity

⁵³ (Abure, 2019; Christian, 2014)

⁵⁴ (Baxter, 2021)



and climate change profoundly affect vulnerable people, and high levels of gender-based violence (GBV) are reported across the country. This includes rape and sexual assault; abductions of women and children, especially during cattle raids; forced sexual favours; domestic violence; psychological and emotional abuse; and child marriage. According to the 2024 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan for South Sudan, an estimated 2.5 million people risk GBV challenges in 2024. But communities admit that many GBV incidents go unreported.⁵⁵ About 400,000 people are estimated to have been killed in the war, including notable atrocities such as the 2014 Bentiu massacre. Although both the Dinka President and Nuer Vice-President have supporters from across South Sudan's ethnic divides, subsequent fighting has been communal, with rebels targeting members of Kiiir's Dinka ethnic group and government soldiers attacking Nuers. More than 4 million people have been displaced, with about 1.8 million of those internally displaced, and about 2.5 million having fled to neighbouring countries, especially Uganda and Sudan. Campaigns of atrocities against civilians have been attributed to the SPLA. In the SPLA/M's attempt to disarm rebellions among the traumatised civilian populations, they burned scores of villages, raped hundreds of women and girls and killed an untold number of civilians. Civilians alleging torture claim fingernails being torn out, burning plastic bags dripped on children to make their parents hand over weapons, and villagers burned alive in

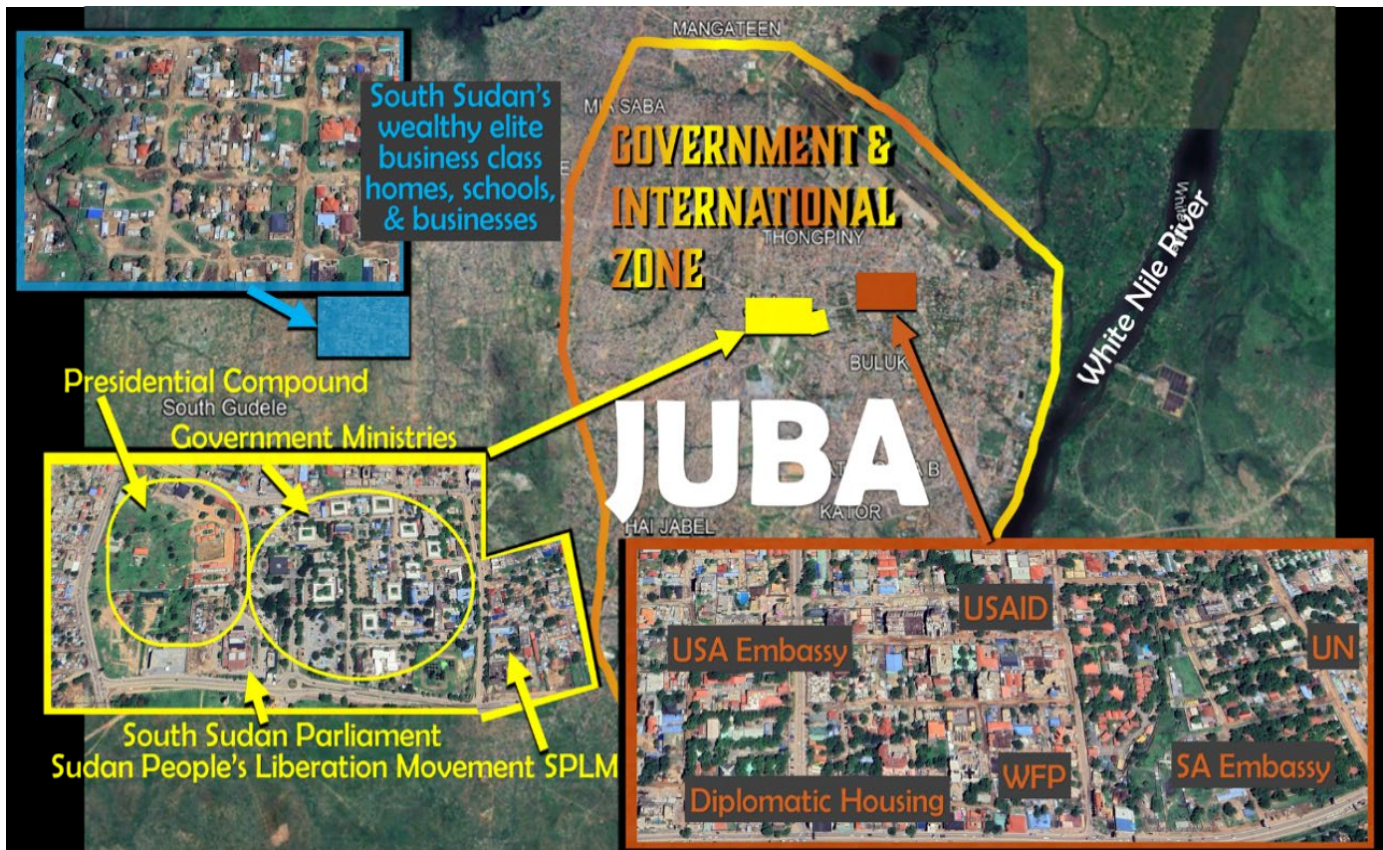


Figure 20 Juba, a port city on the White Nile, is the capital of South Sudan and one of the fastest growing cities in the world. Juba's population is estimated to be roughly 350,000 to 400,000. The city has doubled in size since 2005, when a peace agreement ended the war between the Arab north and the African south. Both hopeful immigrants and returning residents have created the population surge. The city was a central point for humanitarian aid, and the operations base for the UN and NGOs during the Sudanese conflicts. During the fighting, city infrastructure and main transportation arteries suffered heavy damage. The city is still surrounded by army camps and squatter settlements (labelled "informal built-up areas" in the image). They appear as muted grey areas extending outward from the centre of the city. Since independence, a variety of countries and international organizations have helped rebuild Juba's roads, railroads, and airport. South Sudan continues to experience local wars with a variety of armed groups, including on-going conflicts with Sudan over oil-rich territories.

⁵⁵ (UN Humanitarian, 2023)



their huts if it was suspected that rebels had spent the night there. In May 2011, the SPLA allegedly set fire to over 7,000 homes in Unity State. The UN reports many of these violations and the frustrated director of one Juba-based international aid agency calls them "human rights abuses off the Richter scale". The Nuer White Army has stated it wished to "wipe out the entire Dinka-Murle tribe on the face of the earth as the only solution to guarantee long-term security of Nuer's cattle."

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