For over two decades, the region of Sudan suffered from a brutal civil war that claimed the lives of 2.2 million people. Spearheaded by the United States, the international community pushed for a series of long peace talks, culminating in the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement. World leaders authorized the United Nations Mission to Sudan (UNMIS) to assist in implementing post-bellum reconstruction. In a 2011 referendum, South Sudan voted to secede and gained independence, prompting the creation of the United Nations Mission to South Sudan (UNMISS).

A key component of UNMISS strategy is diaspora community engagement. An estimated 1.2 to 1.7 million people with Sudanese origin live abroad, participating actively in economic development, lobbying activities, humanitarian aid, and media awareness programs. Harnessing and developing this human capacity continues to be an essential objective for the United Nations in order to improve the peace-building process in Sudan and South Sudan.
United Nations Missions in Sudan and South Sudan: Diaspora Community Engagement

Relevant History of Conflict

For over two decades (1983-2005), the region of Sudan suffered from a brutal civil war that claimed the lives of 2.2 million people. The discovery of oil in South Sudan prompted President Jaafar Numeiri to bypass the autonomy promised in the 1972 Addis Ababa Agreement and to invade the resource-rich areas. Government forces and Sudan’s People Liberation Army (SPLA), further infuriated by the nationwide imposition of Sharia Islamic law, began fighting for control. Omar Bashir eventually assumed power of the presidency after a military coup in 1989. Throughout the 1990s, President Bashir consolidated his rule, actively hindering the opposition, and continued the conflict with SPLA up to a landmark ceasefire agreement, Machakos Protocol in 2002. An uprising in the west in 2003 led to genocide-level violence in the Darfur region.

Spearheaded by the United States, the international community pushed for a series of long peace talks, culminating in the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement. The United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) was authorized to help implement the CPA. Major fighting broke out again in the oil-rich area of Abyei in 2008. In a 2011 referendum, South Sudan voted to secede and gained independence. UNMIS ended and transitioned into the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). Wealth sharing and border demarcation remain points of contention between Sudan and South Sudan, impacting the peacekeeping and peace-building efforts of the United Nations (UN).

Amidst this chaos, 4 million South Sudanese fled their homes. The majority are still internally displaced persons (IDPs) while others escaped to found diaspora communities in Africa and other countries. An estimated 1.2 to 1.7 million people with Sudanese origin live...
abroad.\textsuperscript{12} Throughout the civil war, refugee camps sprouted up along the borders of Ethiopia, Kenya, and Chad. Presently, refugee camps in South Sudan are growing by 1,000 people per day as a result of border disputes.\textsuperscript{13} The UN, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and other assistance networks continue to provide aid and support for the refugees.

\textbf{UN Implementation of Diaspora Community Engagement}

\textit{Overview}

Though scholars remain divided on an exact definition, a Diaspora at its simplest is a migrant community that maintains economic, socio-cultural, and political ties with their country of origin in exile.\textsuperscript{14} The common causes such as civil war, humanitarian crisis, or natural disaster usually initiate these mass migrations that result in diaspora formation. Of particular interest is how diaspora communities engage with their country of origin in exile and how much impact their efforts have on the situation at hand. In recent history, Diasporas have participated actively in economic development, lobbying activities, humanitarian aid, and media awareness programs.\textsuperscript{15} The UN recognizes the integral role that diaspora community engagement plays in institution building and reconstruction. Mr. Nassir Al-Nasser, UN President of the General Assembly, emphasized, “our collective action must be directed towards supporting diasporas, so that their contribution to development might achieve their full potential”.\textsuperscript{16} Resolutions 1590 and 1996, which authorize the deployments of UNMIS and UNMISS respectively, affirm the potential for fulfilling mission objectives through diaspora communities originating from Sudan and South Sudan. Resolution 1590 emphasizes the “importance of appropriate expertise on issues relating to post-conflict peacebuilding”\textsuperscript{17} and welcomes the “initiative of the Government of Norway to convene an international donors’ conference for the reconstruction and economic development of Sudan.”\textsuperscript{18} These two clauses recognize the value of second generation
peacekeeping, building effective political, economic, and civil institutions in order to ensure a stable peace. As will be discussed in more detail, diaspora communities like the Sudanese population in Norway play a vital role in this process. Resolution 1996 similarly pledges “to utilize to the greatest extent possible opportunities for co-location of appropriate mission components with the Republic of South Sudan counterparts in the interest of building national capacity.”

In the cases of UNMIS and UNMISS, the Sudanese and South Sudanese diaspora communities serve important functions including financial support, human capacity development, and political participation for peace-building in Sudan and South Sudan.

Lost Boys and Girls of Sudan and South Sudan

The experience of the “lost boys of the Sudan” has received considerable media attention from the West, serving as a primary example of UN directed creation of diaspora communities. Fleeing the violence in South Sudan in the late 1980s, over 30,000 refugee boys, enduring hunger, disease, and combat, marched hundreds of miles to find safe haven. Only 12,000 boys survived the entire journey to the refugee camps of Kenya. From this total, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in coordination with the US Department of State cleared 3,800 “lost boys” for resettlement in the United States. This represents the first time the UNHCR ever approved a migration program for such a large number of unaccompanied minors. The “lost boys of the Sudan” have formed active diaspora communities across America, particularly in Omaha, Nebraska, with the help of charity organizations and Christian societies who provide services for integration. This case may be identified as a key success for UN implementation and sets a precedent for what the current mission in South Sudan necessitates. Presently, over 60,000 refugees, a new generation of “lost boys and girls,” have fled south from the Nuba Mountains where the fighting has been heaviest in recent months.
The overpopulated refugee camps signify that another large resettlement initiative is crucial to save the suffering and to ensure the continual growth of Sudanese Diasporas, which play such an important role in peace-building. Presently, the UNHCR is committed to establishing new refugee camps throughout South Sudan to bring relief to those near the militarized zones. Particular progress has been made on the prevention of statelessness for those on the disputed borders whose Sudanese citizenship was revoked. Appropriate medical care persists as a key concern in the refugee camps, particularly with the outbreak of Hepatitis E resulting in 6,017 reported cases and 111 deaths since July.\textsuperscript{26} To alleviate some of this anguish, two “lost boys of the Sudan,” Jok Dau and Bol Aweng, decided to help restore some stability to this place they escaped decades prior. With direction from Steve Walker, former director of Ohio Refugee Services, and support from various central Ohio Christian communities, Dau and Aweng, graduates of The Ohio State University, built the Buckeye Health Clinic, which provides prenatal and child care to the people in their home village of Piol.\textsuperscript{27} Through last December, the medical staff at their progressive facility had vaccinated over 360 newborns.\textsuperscript{28} Such grassroots initiatives by those who have not forgotten represent excellent opportunities to improve South Sudan one small impactful step at a time.

*Human Capacity Development*

A key dimension of peace-building involves training and finding people to contribute to the restructuring of the political, economic, and cultural institutions of society. This human capacity development of recruiting high skilled individuals from diaspora communities promotes an influx of new ideas and resources into countries ravaged by war.\textsuperscript{29} The Columbus International Program (CIP), a non-profit organization and U.S. State Department affiliate dedicated to promoting international understanding through intercultural exchange, hosts
delegations and business professionals to participate in training programs ranging from one week to twelve months.  

I am an intern at CIP and have recently worked with Steve Walker to craft a proposal for the Ministry of Health in South Sudan to invite a delegation of health professionals from South Sudan to Columbus to study the American system of prenatal and child care. With one in five children not living to the age of five, improving the health care system is a top priority for South Sudan. CIP serves as a clear illustration for the potential impact that non-governmental organizations with affiliations with the government can have on human capacity development and subsequent growth back in the home country.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) often partners with the UN to facilitate similar programs. In 2007, the IOM had 724 qualified candidates registered in their return of qualified nationals database. A total of 122 skilled individuals have returned from abroad to South Sudan since 2006. Promoting the return of qualified nationals is an essential step in providing a certain level of competency and legitimacy to newly established institutions. It also likely provides more assurance to foreign donors who would much rather have a Western trained professional in control versus a former warring faction leader. However, the international community should not overlook the local expertise on the ground. Degrees cannot substitute for first-hand experience of the conflict; therefore, individuals from Diasporas are so valuable. They have both a thorough understanding of the situation and special training from abroad to facilitate effective growth in their country.

University partnerships provide another outlet for developing the skills of Sudanese and South Sudanese individuals still in country and abroad. A 10-year IOM study from 1997-2007 shows thousands of Sudanese students have pursued tertiary education in such countries as the UK, US, and Germany. According to UNESCO, approximately 2,900 Sudanese leave abroad
for tertiary education per year.\textsuperscript{34} This is crucial, considering only 1.9\% of the 1.3 million children enrolled in South Sudan actually complete the primary education cycle.\textsuperscript{35} The UN actively collaborates with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to promote various university partnership programs. USAID invites US universities to connect with universities in South Sudan in order to create reliable channels for aid and to provide new opportunities for education.\textsuperscript{36} US universities such as Texas A&M, Louisiana State University, and San Diego State, were selected based on environmental climates similar to South Sudan.\textsuperscript{37} This allows Americans and visiting South Sudanese students to specialize in issues crucial to the peace-building objectives of the UN. One project already underway is the use of precision agriculture in order to tap into the vast potential of the fertile land in South Sudan.\textsuperscript{38} Since nearly 97\% of the South Sudanese budget comes from oil, the UN may utilize these programs to further educate the populace in order to diversify the economy into the agricultural sector and to continue bolstering the human capacity of South Sudan.\textsuperscript{39}

\textit{Foreign Investment}

Another reason the UN must strive to keep diaspora communities engaged in peace-building efforts is because a solid source of funding originates from these groups in the form of a global remittance network. From 1995-2008, Sudanese families abroad sent a total of USD 1.9 billion back to Sudan.\textsuperscript{40} The academic opportunities, particularly at the tertiary level, allow Sudanese emigrants to secure high-paying professions as doctors, lawyers, and businessmen, and the resulting money is often dispatched home. The oil sector also draws a significant amount of foreign investment, totaling USD 3.5 billion after the CPA and some financial reforms.\textsuperscript{41} Despite rapid economic growth since the signing of the CPA, the Sudan and South Sudan largely depend on oil with the IOM concluding that the “vast agricultural potential of Sudan remains mostly
This explains why more than half the populace, which survives mostly on farming particularly in rural areas, is living below the poverty line. The UN must be more successful in funneling foreign investment into markets that can benefit the most people.

**Lobbying Activities**

Diaspora communities play a central role in the political process of the country in conflict and lobbying for support in the host country. Protests in 1998 and 2000 along with the celebrity of basketball player, Manut Bol, brought international awareness to the situation in Sudan, initiating a call for peace negotiations. In the peace-building stage, the UN often coordinates with home associations, which are transnational ethno-territorial networks of diasporas and national groups that work to promote development in their home state. These organizations tend to mimic NGOs; however, they usually choose different projects that “create opportunities for the articulation of local desires.” The UN may promote such groups in order to more accurately address the needs of a war-torn society. Many scholars have researched how diaspora members mobilize around a political representative, particularly a 2002 case study that focused on 500 Sudanese individuals in Oslo, Norway. Researchers observed that the diaspora community represented the diversity of country; thus, since 56 different ethnic groups live in Sudan, a sense of unity was sometimes difficult to find amongst people. Many were not politically active but just focused on daily life. However, the feeling of alienation prompted by living in a foreign land did keep the desire to return home strong. It is usually this loyalty to place and community that motivates emigrants to join home associations. The UN can focus on using Sudanese and South Sudanese diaspora communities as a mobilizing tool to unite people often from opposing sides and to pinpoint the appropriate development initiatives to most effectively rebuild the Sudan region.
Evaluation of UN Implementation of Diaspora Community Engagement

Successes

The UN has been moderately successfully in bolstering diaspora community engagement in peace-building operations. The “Lost Boys of Sudan” relocation program was an impressive display of how the UN can single-handedly create diaspora communities, which prove extremely helpful in reviving war torn societies. The university partnership programs and both training and return of qualified nationals embody two creative initiatives actively supported by the UN. According to a policy brief prepared by the Clingendael Conflict Research Unit, UNMISS has made “contributions to capacity building” mainly by “organizing training courses,” which has resulted in “good in-house expertise.” The tertiary education statistics readily suggest that the UN has positively fueled the growth of opportunities available for human capacity development. This bodes well for finding competent individuals to provide sound leadership to new political, economic, and civil institutions. Through diaspora community engagement, the UN has certainly established the potential for Sudan and South Sudan to become well-functioning countries.

Failures

Unfortunately, the potential for success has not significantly translated into real success. Though providing a variety of training opportunities, operators on the ground expressed frustration with the “mission’s lack of effort to find out what those who have received training actually do with their newly acquired knowledge.” Advancing technologies such as precision agriculture look promising, but the Sudanese region still entirely runs on monies from the oil sector, which is detrimental to a population mostly surviving on farming. More resources need to be diverted to building up the agricultural sector, especially in South Sudan. In the political
sphere, Sudanese and South Sudanese lobbyist groups have been quite influential, particularly in America, but more effort must be made in creating a sense of unity amongst members of diaspora communities. Perhaps if individuals from opposing sides make peace abroad, then such reconciliation can spread to the conflict area as well. The UN may foster further diversification of the economy and engage Diasporas in new ways in order to mobilize a feeling of community and resolve the underlying issues of the conflict.

Looking to the Future

The UN will have an incredibly difficult time carrying out second-generation peacekeeping functions while the region is still destabilized by border disputes and inter-communal violence. Special Representative for South Sudan, Hilde F. Johnson, recently briefed the Security Council, explaining the transition in South Sudan “towards a stable, viable State continues at an uneven pace.” An increase in heavy fighting in the eastern state of Jonglei may require military operations to protect civilians and stabilize the situation. Internal security problems and violations of the CPA continue to hinder other objectives crucial to making South Sudan a prosperous nation; however, the cessation of hostilities must be a primary focus before the UN can look to the longer-term commitment of institution building. Engaging diaspora communities create a forum both to address points of contention peacefully and effectively and to provide academic and career options in order to give the populace the skills and mediums to make significant positive change in Sudan and South Sudan. The UN rightfully recognizes diaspora community engagement to be a decisive force behind peace-building that will ultimately “save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.”
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