

Article 15 on South Sudan

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Ottawa

Developments in South Sudan Conflict: Will Malakal Fall again? Is Kiir now safe?

Our Articles 1 to 3 and 5 to 14 were situation analysis of the conflict in South Sudan. Our article 4 (A) and 4 (B) were the first of our series on “Who is Who”. This article (15) is dedicated to new developments in Upper Nile State, emerging stories, the bleak picture of the talks in Addis and the unexpected fortunes of Khartoum.

Who is Charlemagne? (Not the “father of Europe” of the 9th century) but of South Sudan.

He is Char Chuhuge, Nuer from Nasir, Gai Duk.

He was born around 1950

He studied English Language in Asyout in Egypt.

Became a teacher before going into politics

He was Governor of Upper Nile twice under Beshir’s Regime and before the CPA

He was an advisor in the government of the State of Khartoum of Dr. Abdelhalim Al Mutaafi

He was close to DK (Daniel Kot Mathews) one of the Nuer elites.

In 2011 he was appointed as a member of parliament in the Federal Legislative Assembly in Juba

He took that as “under-employment” for him but used his governance expertise well in the Legislative Assembly in Juba

But why are we concerned about him?

He managed to slip away from Juba and went to his home county of Nasir.

He managed to assemble 6500 armed white army and is moving towards Malakal

As the Nuers have the entire Sobat Valley Counties, nothing impedes his march to Malakal expected to take 3 days from today.

That is not all !

All the regulars and white army who fled away after Malakal was retaken by Kiir’s forces joined him on the way.

In spite of their ill-equipment, they will be about 9000 when they get to Malakal. They may be unstoppable.

Is it worth it?

There is no “Physical” gain to retake Malakal, but there may be “political” and psychological gain. It is one of the major three garrison towns of South Sudan with Juba and Wau. But the toll in lives will be immense. It could be Nuer against Nuer if the SSLA decides to fight with the SPLA.

The lunatic Ugandans

Killers?

Kolonyang Payam (Locality) is not really all Dinka. It is about 30 KM South East of Bor. There are many Murles. After the Nuer forces attacked Kolonyang on February 5th (Nuer women participated in the attack), The Dinkas and non Nuers in the Payam fled to Bor.

Finding nothing left in Bor, they headed to the river and were glad to find 6 boats to take them to the west bank of the Nile to join their other Dinka folks. (All the calls to reassemble Bor residents back in Bor have failed). 6 boats crossing; the Ugandan thought they were Nuers crossing and bombarded them and killed all the people in the 6 boats.

The contempt and crudeness of Museveni

For doing a good job killing South Sudanese, Museveni promoted the butcher Kanyaja Muhanga who heads the operations in South Sudan.

Who will pay the Ugandans?

They were hoping that the IGAD will foot the bill! IGAD has no money. No one is willing to give them money to pay the Ugandans.

Then surfaces the “Status of Forces Agreement” of January 10th (But the date on the side of the cover page is January 14th). We will do article by article analysis of the agreement in a future article. But now we have a formal document signed by the Minister of Defence of South Sudan allowing Ugandans to kill South Sudanese folks! Semantics aside, that is what it amounts to.

But with such an agreement and with no one else willing to pay Uganda, there remains one kitty to pay from: The oil of South Sudan as and when it flows and there is money.

Puffed up by his puffed up President and the GRSS, Lt Colonel Paddy Ankunda says” I like the rhetoric; now they (US) can give orders because UPDF stopped a potentially volatile situation”. Well that was in South Sudan and not in Uganda! There is a volatile situation in CAR! Start packing!

They have booted themselves out of the IGAD process.

The Sons of Taban Deng and Riek Machar (two innocent boys) who narrowly escaped murder:

Tuesday December 17th. The two boys come out of their hiding and manage to get to Juba Airport. They manage to get to the stairs of the plane provided by the Americans and other Western Nations to evacuate their citizens. Both boys are citizens of Western Nations.

The security operatives of Kiir grabs them and takes them off the plane, takes their passports and mobile (Cell) phones. That is the prelude to murder. By chance Gen James Hoth Mai, the Chief of Staff was in the VIP hall at the airport to see off foreign nationals. Several Western Ambassadors and diplomats were there as well. Someone alerts him to the possible fate of the 2 boys. He intervenes, takes the boys in his car and takes them to his home. (Hoth's bodyguards are not Nuers, but are not stooges of Kiir).

He goes straight to Kiir's home and tells him the story. Kiir hesitates and there is take and give and a face-saving questioning of the boys and they go back to the airport with Hoth and their diplomats and fly off to safety. A James Bond film? Close to it; but this one is reality.

It is a puzzle how long Hoth shall remain loyal to Kiir or to his military ethics in an army that does not seem to have any.

Addis Talks

1. Are they starting round II from zero or building on round I?
2. Well, round I did not go anywhere: The 4 most senior detainees are still behind bars and the 7 are held in Nairobi and the fighting is going on unabated.
3. The big question is: Are all the "Primary Stake Holders"¹ in the room in Addis? I doubt it.
4. Is there a way to transition the conflict from: Personal grudges, bloodshed, political rivalry, tribal fights, manifestation of fragility, foreign intervention, narrow local interests (to mention a few) into "Common Interests" which are the major move from "Positions" after which they can start to generate "doable options"?
5. Every day we see Kiir behaving like a "Sultan" rather than a "President". With the whole world treating him with contempt, he assumes it is business as usual. But he is now "micro-managing".
6. The "grace" of the process is not there in Addis. The mediators are doing too much "Shuttle Diplomacy". The mandates of the parties negotiating teams are not clear and whatever is there seems to be very weak.
7. Do we have a declaration of principles yet?

How is Juba? We ask daily:

1. Prices of Sugar, bread, cooking gas have gone up. Roads through Gulu-Nimule, Lokichokio-Narus and New Lasu-Yei are shut or only trickling
2. Fuel?? Strangely enough no one cares! There are no cars running in the streets. People have run away. All the claims that "Juba is back to normal" are unfounded.
3. We are waiting for confirmation or negation of the news that Kiir' forces surrounded the UNMISS compound and demanded handing over of the 20,000 IDPs sheltering there and finally went away taking the civilians cars parked outside the compound.

¹ Primary Stakeholders are those who can impact positively or negatively on the conflict
Secondary Stakeholders are those who are impacted upon by the conflict
External stakeholders are the effective or ineffective Western Diplomats

Khartoum flexing muscles

In spite of the internal turmoil within the NCP, Khartoum is flexing its muscles. A lot of the heat is off:

1. Carter meets Beshir
2. Beshir tells him “no’ to issuing a visa and receiving Donald Booth
3. International Red Cross is suspended from operations
4. Scores of Western Companies participate in Khartoum International Fare
5. Going to Addis for talks with the SPLM-N on their terms and leaving the SPLM-N disoriented and had to abandon the SRF. Survival!! Most unprofessional communiqué released on February 7th claiming scores of “experts” who later declined to engage.
6. Darfur Civil Society and “Quasi” Civil Society claim that both Minni (SLM/A) and Gibril (JEM) are ready for talks. “Um Garas” seems to be gaining momentum
7. Umma Party, the PCP of Turabi and Reform Now of Ghazi Atabani are willing to engage in dialogue. Who else is left?

Keyboard opposition!

DUP is already on board with NCP.

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