

# Women in Mainstreaming Peace and Security in South Sudan: Lessons Learnt and Way Forward

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## ABSTRACT

The paper examined the essence of women in Mainstreaming Peace and Security in South Sudan by exploring lessons Learned and Way forward. The study has assessed some instruments used in support of UN Resolution 1325 to empower women in promoting peace and security within the country. The paper has examined UNSCR 1325 by understanding the essence of women participation, the execution of the resolution by developing the policy framework, and understanding the avenues applied by women to participate in peace and security in South Sudan. The paper has found out that, R-ARCSS is a great opportunity South Sudan's gender mainstreaming by complying with UN resolution 1325. The purpose of this study was to articulate the desired end state of Women in Mainstreaming Peace and Security in South Sudan: Lessons Learnt and way forward to serve as a platform for discussions at the highest level of decision-making and to provide a guide for further detailed planning in achieving gender mainstreaming within South Sudan.

**Keywords:** Women, Mainstreaming, Security, Peace, Resolution 1325, Execution, implementation, lobby, advocacy, revitalization, participation, and operationalization.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The paper examined the essence of women in Mainstreaming Peace and Security in South Sudan by exploring lessons Learned and Way forward. The study will assess some instruments used in support of UN Resolution 1325 to empower women in promoting peace and security within the country. The reviews would provide a framework for assessing the

effectiveness of UN resolution 1325 based on the best practices promoted by other friendly nations. This is paper provides an overview on the role of women in promoting peace in the context of South Sudan by participating in the High-Level Revitalization Process (HLRF) that resulted into signing Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS). The paper highlights experiences and accounts of the despicable acts that South Sudanese women have faced be part of this historic moment. It provides an overview of why women are agents of peace, essential of their involvement and result of involving women in peace processes. The purpose of this study was to articulate the desired end state of Women in Mainstreaming Peace and Security in South Sudan: Lessons Learnt and way forward to serve as a platform for discussions at the highest level of decision-making and to provide a guide for further detailed planning in achieving gender mainstreaming within South Sudan.

## 2. Putting UNSCR 1325 in Perspective

In understanding the context of UNSCR 1325, the section begins by providing a background account of how resolution came about. It is an important issue in understanding the significance it had on the women's peace movement. The resolution has created an opportunity for women's peace organizations to be involved in lobbying for women's inclusion in conflict resolution and management. This study tries to unveil the women's awareness of SCR 1325. Finally, the main critique put forward in regards to the implementation of

the resolution as well as how this critique relates to the situation in South Sudan.

### **2.1 Setting the Scene for UNSCR 1325**

The signing of SCR 1325 on “Women, Peace and Security in October 2000, was a great milestone in comprehending women’s peace building initiatives because it unveiled women’s right to protection and their role in maintaining peace and security globally. The Security Council had previously only dealt with women peripherally as vulnerable groups and the resolution is significant in the way it treated women as a subject in their own right by highlighting their under-valued role in conflict resolution. SCR 1325 is unusual in the sense that the groundwork, lobbying and drafting was almost entirely the work of civil society and mainly the work of women. Women’s groups have raised campaigns for the recognition of gender issues as governance matter since the creation of the UN in 1945 with some key advancement such as the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

UNSCR 1325 is unique in the sense that it is the first binding international law endorsing issues regarding women, peace and security, hence providing a critical legal and political framework through which, for the first time in history, women worldwide can claim their space and voice their views on peace and security matters.<sup>1</sup> He holds the view that UNSCR 1325 has enhanced human rights instruments honouring women’s rights on average especially those living in conflict-affected areas like South Sudan.<sup>2</sup>

In order to implement SCR 1325 in South Sudan, ACCORD has been recommending that UN Mission Departments and Agencies should promote a vigorous awareness raising to ensure political commitment to the full implementation of UNSCR 1325. This awareness raising campaigns, advocacy activities and mobilization of support for the resolution are part of one of the first

proposed steps needed to implement the resolution. Therefore, government departments and International implementing partners need to be made aware of the commitments of SCR 1325 in involving women to participate in Peace and Security across the country.<sup>3</sup> The above argument was supported by CCR and UNIFEM that stresses “the resolution can only serve to address women’s experiences in conflict and post-conflict situations if civil society groups working at a local level, know how to use it especially in holding national and international bodies accountable to the obligations laid out in the resolution.<sup>4</sup> In setting the scene, this section has shown that despite UNSCR 1325 being a milestone in the women, peace and security across the globe and particularly in South Sudan, much remain to be done by the governments, international organizations, civil organizations and local communities to create awareness on the essence of resolution to promote a greater participation of women in peace building and conflict resolution.

### **2.2 Essence of UNSCR 1325 on Women’s Participation in Peace Processes**

SCR 1325 (2000) comprises 18 articles presenting four areas of concern such as women’s participation in conflict prevention, management and resolution; the use of a gender perspective in peacekeeping missions; the protection of women and girls in armed conflict and the mainstreaming of gender in the UN reporting and implementation system. In line with above reiteration, one of the paragraphs in SCR 1325 reads that the Security Council is: “*Reaffirming the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace building, and stressing the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, and the need to increase their role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution*”.

The above statement encourages the member states to increase representation of women at all levels of decision-making by expressing willingness to take gender considerations into account in Security Council missions through consultation with women's groups, locally and internationally<sup>5</sup>. The resolution is too emphasizing the need to involve and support local women's peace initiatives as well as value indigenous processes when negotiating and implementing peace agreements. In the context of South Sudan, the empowerment of women should contribute to effective post-conflict peace-building. Therefore, the increase in empowerment requires funding for women early to provide them with opportunities for developing peace building and conflict resolution strategies as well as creating women's capacity to engage in public decision making.

### **2.3 The Implementation of UNSCR 1325**

Making UNSCR 1325 realistic has become a nightmare not only in South Sudan but across many countries in the world because of structural problems and shortcomings in terms of implementation. Some scholars have argued that there is a large gap between the diplomatic conceptions of prioritized gender perspectives and what occurs on grass-root levels because women are rarely included in decision-making processes making the implementation to be the most challenging part of the work in operationalization of the resolution.<sup>6</sup> Despite a range of actions, statements and reports to make the resolution workable, the Council appears to struggle with transforming Women, Peace and Security obligations into practice.<sup>7</sup>

In the context of South Sudan where provision of basic services, education, health and security can be used by anyone opposing social change and equality between women and men to delegitimize concerns for gender equality and women's human rights.<sup>8</sup> Due to political crisis in the country, issues dealing with resolving the

conflict in the country were prioritized and women's empowerment was delayed until sustainable peace become realistic in the country. Let's have bring peace first and worry about women's issues later was the dominant an argument among top leaders in the country. This notion was echoed by True (1996) who stress that "women have been told that they will receive equality with men, after the war, after liberation, after the national economy has been rebuilt and so on: but after all of these 'outside' forces have been conquered, the commonplace demand is for things to go back to normal, and women to a subordinate place."<sup>9</sup>

The information flows have been inconsistent and inadequate at reflecting the realities of women in conflict areas to provide policy options to be acted upon because the Council outputs tend to be ad hoc.<sup>10</sup> However, this section shown that SCR 1325 has legal limitations in the sense that in practice, voluntary to implementation in South Sudan since the government has developed an action plan to implement the resolution but lack of funding to support initiatives attempting to do so.

UNSCR 1325, like all other Security Council resolutions, are binding upon all United Nations Member States, and, therefore, the Government of South Sudan is expected to fully implement the resolution. As an independent state and a member of the United Nations, South Sudan is obliged to conform to international standards and legal instruments in respect to human rights observance. This National Action Plan outlines specific actions to be undertaken by the various sectors of government, donors and civil society in order to: alleviate the security situation of women and girls; ensure their participation in decision-making processes; eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls; increase their access to justice and health services; and improved their economic security by making opportunities to access information, credit, employment, education and skills training available to them.<sup>11</sup> The National Action Plan is based on the

mandate of UNSCR 1325 and the activities to be implemented fall under the four pillars of the resolution, as follows<sup>12</sup>:

**I. Prevention:** Reduction in conflict and all forms of structural and physical violence against women, particularly sexual and gender-based violence;

**II. Participation:** Inclusion of women and women's interests in decision-making processes related to the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts;

**III. Protection:** Women's safety, physical and mental health and economic security are assured and their human rights respected; and

**IV. Relief and recovery:** Women's specific needs are met in conflict and post-conflict situations.

In accordance to Status of the African Union implementation of UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security Agenda, most member States have registered a number of achievements in the area of 1325 implementation that has been clustered into five areas. These five clustered areas will be reviewed in the context of South Sudan as follows<sup>13</sup>:

### **I. Legal and policy reform and adoption**

Member States have made strides in putting in place gender equality legal and policy provisions and gender responsive laws and policies. This is particularly so in the area of prevention of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). There have been advances in the availability of services for victims of SGBV, but much less progress with regards to access to justice and other remedies. South Sudan has developed National action plan (NAP) which empower women not be discriminate because of being a female.

### **II. Women's participation in various spheres**

Women should be included in decision-making processes and the security sector. Member States have instituted special measures and quotas, increasing the representation of women in decision-making bodies particularly legislatures and within

the security sector and peacekeeping forces particularly the police. Parliamentary representation is just one indicator of participation, and enhanced representation at all levels and spheres of decision-making need greater emphasis. The transitional constitution of South Sudan 2011 provides that 25% should be given to women in all branches of the government and this was reinforced by Revitalized agreement on Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan which has allotted 35% to women in the transitional government of national unity.

### **III. Promotion**

Member States have made efforts at promotion, through sensitization, popularization, and training initiatives for both service providers and other civil servants, as well as community members. Some Member States have even localized and translated key documents into local languages. The sensitization in the context of South Sudan is still minimal because of insecurity across the country. The availability of strict cultural norms and set up hinders the Ability of women to get informed on their opportunities.

### **IV. Implementation institutions**

Member States have on the whole put in place wide-ranging gender machinery for UNSCR 1325 implementation. New institutions have been established or mechanisms put in place within existing institutions such as - gender desks to facilitate implementation and mainstreaming. In South Sudan, the ministry of Gender and Social welfare has developed a framework for operationalization of the UNSCR 1325.

### **V. Coordination and monitoring**

Lastly, Member States have created coordination and monitoring mechanisms, across ministries, and of a multi-stakeholder nature, which include civil society, partners, and the private sector. Currently, South Sudan has established a clustered ministry such as interior, foreign affairs and defence with each ministry having a focal point

person to coordinate issues pertaining women in peace and security.

In South Sudan, the NAP 2015-2020 on implementation of UNSCR 1325 was used by development partners to identify priority areas for intervention and also help in the mobilization and allocation of the resources required to undertake strategic actions through Government budgetary processes and financial assistance extended to the country. The National Action Plan will also help rally and coordinate the efforts of the various actors in implementation of the identified activities, projects and programmes, as well as the monitoring and evaluation of their impacts, with reference to the given performance indicators and guidelines.

### **3. Execution of UNSCR 1325 in South Sudan**

This section explores the framework and conditions available in South Sudan for the operationalization UNSCR 135 by looking at implementation status or societal obstacles that enhance women participation in peace and security arenas. In order to better comprehend why the implementation of UNSCR 1325 has been ineffective, a number of contradictions in regards to the involvement of women in peace building have been identified such as political for Execution, gender mainstreaming, creating awareness, societal norms and practices and women's empowerment for peace building as examined herein:

#### **3.1 Political will for execution**

Many member states have, in SCR 1889, been encouraged to develop national action plans (NAP) on the implementation of SCR 1325 which has been done by some countries. South Sudan is one of them which have developed and launched the NAP. This was possible through Buy-in at the highest level of political leadership to ensure that women, peace and security issues are given support and resources within the country. The only thing left for South Sudan is allocation of adequate funding which is crucial for a successful and sustainable

implementation of UNSCR 1325. In South Sudan, gender issues are competing with many other post-conflict demands like security threats, economic hyperinflation, lack of infrastructure, education and health services. These national demands could delegitimize concerns for women's human rights and gender equality. This is however a mistake because gender equality is argued to be "essential to building a strong and equitable economy and ensuring a functional state that maximizes the full potential of all South Sudanese."<sup>14</sup> Women played an essential role in the society and their exclusion from social, economic as well as political processes along with their ability to air out concerns could risk the slowing down of the national healing process necessary to build a prosperous nation.

In South Sudan, the implementation of the National Action Plan for UNSCR 1325 focuses on priorities and actions derived from five major objectives, with an overall aim of improving the status of women and girls in respect to peace and security. The objectives are listed below<sup>15</sup>.

**I.** Provide protection for women and girls, including those with disabilities, against any form of sexual and gender-based violence and restore the respect for human rights, human dignity and equality in South Sudan.

**II.** Increase women's participation in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, the maintenance of peace and security, and guarantee their participation in post-conflict peace building and state building processes.

**III.** Enable peace and security stakeholders<sup>3</sup> in South Sudan to galvanize their efforts and ensure the creation of synergy and long-term engagement for the improved implementation of gender-sensitive peace- and security-focused initiatives at national and state levels.

**IV.** Enhance the capacity of the key actors implementing the National Action Plan for data collection, analysis and quality reporting, and promotes increased public awareness of the principles underlined in UNSCR 1325 and the subsequent Security

Council resolutions on women, peace and security.

V. Ensure the inclusion of women and girls' needs in the national budgetary priorities of the transitional assistance plans developed by the Government and all programmes funded by development partners, including in the negotiations of the New Compact Deal.

Therefore, the overall goal of the National Action Plan for UNSCR 1325 was to strengthen the participation of women in peace and security efforts and facilitate the creation of an enabling environment for their leadership and political participation in conflict resolution and allow for more inclusive, just and sustainable peace, recovery and reconstruction processes, where a gender perspective is integrated into the design and implementation of all policies related to peace and security. This National Action Plan provides a framework that will guide decisions on defense, diplomatic, humanitarian and development activities to ensure that the provisions of the United Nations resolutions on women, peace and security are incorporated into the Government's work, with the aim of reducing the impact of conflict on women and girls and increasing women's representation and participation in decision-making.<sup>16</sup>

### **3.2 Gender Mainstreaming**

This concept has proved to be a challenging in South Sudan especially when promoting women inclusion in decision-making for political and public affairs that has been traditionally regarded as a role of men in the society. In ACCORD's study (2012) on the implementation of UNSCR 1325, "women's representation in public decision-making has been inhibited by traditional patriarchal structures and mind-sets, which influence politics and South Sudanese society as a whole."<sup>17</sup> In relation to the above discourse, women who have managed to reach decision-making and leadership positions are often faced with stereotyping, negative attitudes and lack of

recognition and respect. Many men are rejected decisions made by women considering them to be inferior. Women on decision-making positions are not necessarily empowered to make the changes they have envisioned.

Thus, there has been a paradox that gender is regarded as a woman's issue at the same time as women's representation in political decision-making is limited by the assumption that this is a role for men. This leaves the question; who is able to work with gender issues in a meaningful way and with an actual impact on the mainstream work? Implementing UNSCR 1325 in South Sudan is hence holding different challenges compared to countries where men and women are already relatively equal. Involving women in decision-making regarding peace and security brings about a discussion of men and women's roles in the South Sudanese society. Potential for equal participation is therefore related to socially constructed gender roles and possibilities for a deeper change in perceptions regarding these roles. This section has shown that South Sudanese women are not culturally regarded as fit to make decisions binding on men and the society at large. Therefore, there is a need to educate the general population against the negative perception which leads to women's exclusion from social, political and economic processes dealing with peace and security.

### **3.3 Creating awareness on UNSCR 1325**

This resolution has been described as a significant political success of women peace activists that can be used as a tool for women's advocacy and empowerment for enabling women to mobilize nationally for peace building process. The civil society played an essential role in awakening women's spirit for implementation of the resolution. In order to use the resolution to address women's experiences as well as to hold national bodies responsible to its obligations, it is important that civil society groups know how to use the resolution for women's benefit. This is problematic in the

case of South Sudan because the awareness of UNSCR 1325 is very limited because of illiteracy and lack of education among women in the country. For women to guarantee and ensure their rights, they are recommended to network and organize themselves. However, this is a challenge in South Sudan since there are inadequate funds and resources to support and facilitate women's groups, activities and aspirations coupled with the lack of infrastructure and transport to reach grassroots women physically. Therefore, this section has shown that there is the need for a civic education at both the basic level and the adult education level to create the awareness and bring to fore the need to embrace UNSCR 1325 in South Sudan. Moreover, vigorous awareness-raising should be done to ensure political commitment to a full implementation of the resolution.

### **3.4 Societal Norms and Practices**

The difference theory and practice in terms of women's participation in peace building can be explained by UNSCR 1325's shortcoming in recognizing cultural issues reflected in a systematic, everyday marginalization of women by their communities.

In South Sudan, living conditions, traditions, norms and conditions are affecting women's participation in peace building in response to UNSCR 1325. South Sudanese women faced many challenges that are not prevalent in the Eastern African countries that form the majority of the countries that have developed a NAP to implement the resolution. It is important that the implementation process is related to local circumstances. This was reiterated by Reilly (2007) stresses that "the full and equal participation of women in political decision making and policy design and implementation requires positive measures to counter gender inequality across the board: economic, social, cultural, legal and political."<sup>18</sup> This position is highly applicable to the case of South Sudan where women clearly have been, and continue to be

excluded from most social, economic and political processes. Therefore, the context of South Sudan show that women are faced with a range of difficulties such as lack of education, poor health care, domestic violence as well as problems deriving from cultural norms and customary laws.<sup>19</sup> The patriarchal system where children have been socialized into result in most women being under the authority of either a father or a husband and expected to be obedient of male relatives. Cultural practices and patriarchal tendencies assigned women to the domestic sphere and customary laws not letting women inherit along with practices such as bride price and widow heritage have been obstructing women from breaking away from the domestic roles and hindering their development and empowerment. This section concludes that South Sudanese women have been hindered by gender roles from participating in decision making and leadership positions for meaningful contributions on issues related to peace and security.

Currently, the main challenges to South Sudan's security relate to the fragility of the peace due to external and internal unresolved differences, marginalization of some ethnic groups and limitations of capacity and resources to support the transition from conflict to a stable and secure country. A number of unresolved issues with Sudan have persisted since the January 2011 independence referendum, leading to political and economic tensions between the two countries. Such strained relations require patience between the two parties and inter-state negotiations to ensure that no future conflicts emerge. In terms of the personal security of women, the existence of harmful traditional practices, such as child and forced marriages, girl-child compensation, wife battering, polygamy and widow inheritance have reinforced the abuse and violation of women's rights and dignity in the name of holding onto traditions and cultural practices.<sup>20</sup> The demand for payment of exorbitant dowries in the form of cattle and

the prestige that comes with owning cattle has been a major motive for cattle rustling between communities, exacerbating intercommunal conflicts, with dire consequences for women and children. The denial of education and opportunities for employment, rape and defilement, desertion, denial of property especially land for married women and the right to inheritance, together with forced labour, all remain common abuses women have to endure on a daily basis.<sup>21</sup> In the post-conflict period, the responsibility of looking after the family mainly falls on women as many men, including youth, lack employment opportunities and have taken to heavy drinking.

During South Sudan Peace talk in Addis Ababa Ethiopia, the negotiations were widely perceived to be characterized by a patriarchal culture that posed significant challenges for women's meaningful engagement in the process. The process was perceived to be male-dominated and characterized by combatant behaviour, and there were several incidents of verbal abuse and mockery against the women who were vocal in the talks. Some male delegates argued that these women should have stayed in the kitchen, and that women, lacked the technical and political know-how to participate in the negotiations. Another frequently used argument suggested that there are no competent women in South Sudan to be nominated for relevant decision-making positions. The participants also noted that the host and venue of the negotiations had a bearing on the culture, and as such, moving the talks to Khartoum in June 2018 was seen to have exacerbated such patriarchal tendencies.

#### **4. Avenues for Women Engagement in Peace Process**

This section would review various factors essential for facilitating the participation of women in negotiating peace agreement in South Sudan as explored herein:

##### **4.1 Official Invitation**

In the beginning of the peace process, few women activists were invited to the process and repeatedly reminded that they were invited in their individual capacities as women experts. As time goes, these few women rejected being considered solely as individuals by insisting to be included as women block or representative to give more space for other women in making peace a reality in South Sudan. This was meant to underscore the importance of ensuring that women who get access to the table are connected with the wider women's movement and can open up the space for more women representatives to add pressure on parties to the conflict. During the peace process women were able to get in their technical support team, which acted as the support mechanism for performing analyses.

##### **4.2 Lobbying and Advocacy**

This was another avenue where women voices were heard by having prior advocacy and consultations among themselves, regional bodies, prominent personalities, parties to conflict and the United Nations agencies. This was not about women calling for inclusion and pressuring the parties as well as mediators, but beckoning the region and the guarantors to expedite the process of reaching a sustainable agreement. For example, the AU Commission Chairperson, Mr. Moussa Faki, has been outspoken on South Sudan and on the rights and participation of women throughout the HLRF deliberations.

Numerous women's organizations at national and state levels actively engaged in advocacy efforts to call for women's inclusion in the mediation process. In particular, women called on IGAD to work towards the meaningful inclusion of women and civil society in the peace talks as observers, negotiations, and members of relevant committees and in political decision-making at all levels. As a result of this advocacy, for instance, the warring parties were asked to include women in their delegations for the talks in Addis Ababa. For example, the warring parties

were given a condition to include women in the list of delegates sent to Addis Ababa for the peace talks. As a result, the number of women at the end of peace talks had dramatically increased compared to the numbers observed in the beginning.

Various women leaders and women's groups also used their existing contacts and built new relationships with the conflict parties to advocate for a seat at the decision-making tables. At the national level, women parliamentarians utilized their platform, the Women Parliamentarians' Caucus, to engage in regular information sharing and joint massaging to key decision-makers on the most pertinent policy priorities relevant for the negotiations.

#### **4.3 Formation of solidarity groups**

The Participation of women in peace process could not be possible without working a united voice. Women activism culminated into the formation of the South Sudan Women's Coalition where women from the region including the refugees were able to meet occasionally to analyze the progress, review old strategy, bond together and get feedback - from the wider fraternity and develop position papers before another phase of the Peace talks. This empowered woman to be on top of the Peace negotiation agenda through preparation of substantial - feedback, heighten advocacy and pressure around the negotiations.

Women from different ethnic, political and socioeconomic backgrounds formed women's blocs and coalitions to strengthen their collective power. Notably, women peace activists who had already been working together during the peace negotiations with Sudan formed the non-governmental organization (NGO) the Women's Bloc of South Sudan in 2015. Due to intense lobbying the advocacy, the bloc succeeded in securing a seat as women's representatives in the IGAD-led peace process. The bloc was a signatory to the subsequent agreements, including both the ARCSS of August 2015-which

collapsed within less than a year as well as the R-ARCSS of 2018.

The women's groups and network also made concerted efforts to learn how to navigate the complex negotiation process to strengthen their influence. For example, they sought technical support to improve their understanding of the draft provisions under discussion and conducted power analyses of the negotiations, which helped them conduct more targeted advocacy. As a result, women's professionalism increased in the course of the negotiation process. The women established a process of agreeing on and issuing a series of red lines as well as green lines; and collaborated to promote these positions in formal and informal discussions. This gave increased weight to collective advocacy efforts as it helped make their positions clear.

#### **4.4. Pressure and persuasion to the Parties**

Women's organizations also played important roles in ensuring that the conflict parties remained in the negotiations. When the process was at a standstill, a group of women leaders particularly the Women's Bloc and the SSWC – worked to break the deadlock by meeting with key conflict parties and persuading them to continue working for a peaceful solution to the conflict. The women's groups jointly demanded that opposition leader Dr. Riek Machar, who was under house arrest in South Africa, should be released in order for him to be able to join the peace talks and meet with President Salva Kiir. When the president visited the parliament, all women parliamentarians met with him to articulate a strong call for peace.

#### **4.5 Community outreach for Inclusivity**

Women's organizations contributed to a more inclusive peace process by advancing civic engagement and coordinating their work closely with civil society actors inside and outside South Sudan. A variety of initiatives sprung up at both local and national levels, including consultations, joint interest formation,

collective mobilization and formation of social media groups, to channel concerns and priorities of women and other civil constituencies into the negotiations. To the extent possible, women delegates strove to ensure that women and civil society actors who were not in Addis Ababa and Khartoum were constantly updated on the progress of the negotiations. Following the signing of the peace deal, several women's groups and organizations have continued to raise awareness and disseminate the peace agreement to citizen to get their buy-in to the process.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The UNSCR was a landmark in the women; peace and security field but has some challenges in making it a realistic framework in South Sudan. The framework took over two decades from 2000 to 2015 where the National action plan was operationalized. The enactment of Nap coincided with an opportunity for women involvement in peace-building through participation in achieving the Revitalized Agreement on Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS). The study explores the operationalization of UNSCR 1325 by examining the available instruments and opportunities created by the government to empower women to participate in Peace and security in South Sudan. This study has revealed a large gap between theory and practice in South Sudan. The major factor that contributing to lack of practices was the political will by the government and cultural norms that hinders women from unleashing their full potential in peace and security.

In addition, the study revealed that South Sudanese women have been faced with many challenges ranging from basic needs to structural issues like illiteracy, poor health care, domestic inequalities and discriminative laws. These issues have been affecting all women which reduce their possibility to participate in decision-making regarding security and peace-building. In the effort that led to signing of R-ARCSS,

women's contribution to security and peace building visible and significant as illustrated in the study. Therefore, women's contributions should acknowledge, and appreciated. The R-ARCSS assigned 35% of the cabinet position but the South Sudanese gender roles is hindering women on leadership positions from making meaningful contributions since they are often faced with negative attitudes and lack of recognition and respect.

## Author's Profile

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