

SPECIAL REPORT

Strategic Peacebuilding

The Role of Civilians and Civil Society in Preventing Mass Atrocities in South Sudan

*The Cases of the SPLM Leadership Crisis (2013),
the Military Standoff at General Malong's House (2017),
and the Wau Crisis (2016–17)*

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Executive Summary

Conflict in South Sudan during the past seven years has led to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of South Sudanese civilians and the displacement of millions more. Large-scale, systematic violence against civilian populations has occurred throughout South Sudan as a result of national-scale disputes, local-level conflicts, and a combination of the two.

This paper examines civilian-led action in three cases: (1) the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM) leadership crisis in 2013, (2) a military standoff between President Salva Kiir and former Chief of General Staffs Paul Malong in 2017, and (3) conflicts between local security forces in Wau from 2016 to 2017.

Despite the severity of the violence, civilian communities and civil society organizations in South Sudan have used a range of strategies—including early warning, public advocacy, and mediation—to prevent mass atrocities and mitigate their escalation. These actors sometimes blurred the lines between civilian and fighter, as in the case of self-protection groups in the northwestern Wau region. Legal restrictions and the threat of harassment by South Sudanese security forces also placed significant constraints on the ability of both national-level and local-level civil society organizations to act against potential and ongoing violence. In some circumstances, civilian-led efforts successfully resolved conflicts and constrained violence; in others, violence persisted despite civilian actions.

Our analysis indicates that two factors explain why one civilian-led action, the effort by Concerned Citizens’ Committee for Peace (CCCP) to mediate between Kiir and Malong, succeeded in preventing violence, while the civilian responses to the early days of the SPLM leadership crisis in 2013 and to local-level violence in Wau did not.

1. *Prior experience in the prevention of conflict:* Civilian leaders of the CCCP had prior experience in the prevention of political conflict that provided them with greater skill and social prestige in their attempts to mediate between Kiir and Malong.
2. *Common ethnic identities:* Common Dinka identities also allowed civilian mediators in the Kiir and Malong case to frame potential conflicts as threats to the Dinka community’s cohesion, whereas the SPLM leadership and Wau crises lacked similar frames to mobilize action.

We do not find that civil society organizations in the Wau case were more effective in mitigating violence against civilians than their national-level counterparts.

This case comparison underscores the obstacles to civilian-led efforts to prevent and mitigate mass atrocities in South Sudan. Civil society networks in the two national-level cases were able to take informal actions to prevent and mitigate atrocities in large part because of the political prominence of their members. Organizations with fewer ties to the ruling SPLM party faced more significant obstacles to political action, including repression, harassment, and pressure to self-censor public communications.

Introduction

This study explores civilian-led actions taken to prevent and mitigate mass atrocities in South Sudan during the violent conflict from 2013 to the present. In late 2013, a violent conflict broke out in South Sudan when the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM), the ruling party, imploded in a power struggle between supporters of South Sudanese president Salva Kiir (SPLM-in-government, or SPLM-IG) and supporters of Vice President Riek Machar (SPLM-in-opposition, or SPLM-IO). In the early days of the crisis, government soldiers organized door-to-door searches and committed ethnically targeted violent attacks against and extrajudicial killings of predominantly Nuer civilians. Perpetrators of violence throughout South Sudan, especially in Upper Nile and Central Equatoria, Jonglei, Lakes, and Unity States, engaged in systematic violence against civilians, including killings, rape, arbitrary detentions, torture, destruction of civilian property, and looting.¹ At the time of writing, violence by both state and nonstate forces continues to threaten South Sudanese civilians despite the creation of the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity (R-TGoNU) in February 2020.

Risks of violence resulting from conflict led to a range of responses from various communities facing imminent or potential risks of mass atrocities. South Sudan civil society organizations played a critical role in a number of preventive actions in response to potential mass atrocities across the country.² Mobilization by formal and informal civil society actors successfully prevented some conflicts, while in others, these actions failed to protect civilians at risk. What explains the variations across cases within this single episode?

To better understand the range of civilian responses to potential and ongoing mass atrocities and the factors that contributed to variations in the success of those efforts, we explore civilian-led actions taken to prevent and mitigate potential mass atrocities in three cases: (1) the SPLM leadership crisis in 2013; (2) a military standoff between President Salva Kiir and General Chief of Staff Paul Malong in November 2017; and (3) conflicts between local security forces in Wau from 2016 to 2017. We use information gathered through semistructured interviews with 34 representatives of formal and informal civil society organizations to describe civilian-led actions in these three cases.³

We find that two factors explain why the civilian-led attempt by the Concerned Citizens’ Committee for Peace (CCCCP) to mediate between elites succeeded in diffusing during the Kiir-Malong standoff, while the civilian response to the early days of the SPLM-IG/SPLM-IO crisis and the Wau crisis did not. First, prior experience in the prevention of political conflict gave civilian leaders greater skill and social prestige in their attempts to mediate between conflict actors. Second, common Dinka identities also allowed civilian mediators in the Kiir-Malong case to frame potential conflicts as threats to common group cohesion, whereas the SPLM leadership and Wau crises lacked similar frames to mobilize action.

¹ Human Rights Watch, “South Sudan: Ethnic Targeting, Widespread Killings,” January 16, 2014, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/01/16/south-sudan-ethnic-targeting-widespread-killings>.

² Regional and international actors also have contributed to efforts to prevent mass atrocities in South Sudan, including mediation, targeted financial sanctions, and other policy efforts.

³ For safety reasons, names of some people interviewed have been withheld.

We do not find that civil society organizations in the Wau case were more effective in mitigating violence against civilians than their national-level counterparts.

We proceed in three parts. First, we define the concepts of civilians and civil society in the context of South Sudanese politics and discuss how these concepts differ from conventional, arguably Western, definitions. Second, we introduce the three cases, describe civilian actions during those episodes, and describe why variations in prior experience and common ethnic identity account for different outcomes across cases. We also draw attention to the role that pre-existing networks, like local church institutions and civil society coalitions, played in mobilizing civilians to respond to the risks of violence and in providing immediate assistance to civilians facing violence. We conclude by discussing implications for civilian-led efforts to prevent and mitigate mass atrocities, both in South Sudan and around the world.

Civilians and Civil Society in South Sudan

Definition of Civilians

In South Sudan, there are multiple means of distinguishing between civilians and armed forces such as those that participated in the 2013 SPLM conflict and fighting in Wau. Both state and nonstate armed forces in South Sudan are typically organized under one chain of command, wear visible military uniforms, and carry arms openly. However, multiple groups in South Sudan complicate the distinction between armed forces and civilians. Militia groups that are less visibly affiliated with an organized security force also engage in hostilities against civilian populations.⁴ In South Sudan, militias are armed groups that organize separately from organized state or rebel forces and without explicit political objectives.⁵ They may mobilize alongside state or rebel parties, but these are circumstantial alliances with separate command structures.⁶ In the 2013 conflict, for example, the SPLM-IO used the communal White Army militia, which predominately fought alongside trained soldiers.⁷ In Wau, the Fertit Lions militia was the most prominent SPLM-IO-aligned militia group. The Mathiang Anyoor militia, by contrast, fought alongside the SPLM-IG forces.⁸ These groups did not have full training in military drills and

⁴ “Informal Armies Community Defence Groups in South Sudan’s Civil War,” ed. Victoria Brereton (Saferworld, London, 2017), <https://www.Saferworld.org.uk/resources/publications/1108-informal-armies-community-defence-groups-in-south-sudanas-civil-war>.

⁵ “Informal Armies.”

⁶ “Informal Armies.”

⁷ Ingrid Marie Breidlid and Michael J. Arensen, “The Nuer White Armies: Comprehending South Sudan’s Most Infamous Community Defence Group,” in “Informal Armies Community Defence Groups in South Sudan’s Civil War” (Saferworld, London, 2017).

⁸ Luka Biong Deng Kuol, “Dinka Youth in Civil War: Between Cattle, Community and Government” in “Informal Armies: Community Defence Groups in South Sudan’s Civil War” (Saferworld, London, 2017).

doctrines; however, they maintained some degree of military structure that differentiated them from civilian groups. In many cases, militia members reverted back to civilian life during periods of non mobilization; both the SPLM-IG and the SPLM-IO integrated others into professional military operations.⁹

Self-protection groups that South Sudanese communities form for ad hoc collective defense also blur the distinction between fighters and civilians. These cases fall short of informal militia groups, because civilian members of these self-protection forces have no open allegiance to any armed group.¹⁰ Despite this ostensibly neutral stance, both sides of South Sudan’s civil conflict often accuse civilians—especially the young men who make up these temporary self-protection forces—of aligning with their military opponents.¹¹ In Wau, for example, SPLM-IG forces accused local farmers of supporting the SPLM-IO.¹² Opposition forces made similar accusations against youth groups called Gelweng, who had intended to protect seasonal cattle supply, and prevented them from entering opposition-controlled areas.¹³

Definition of Civil Society

South Sudan’s Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Act defines “civil society” as “a non-governmental and a non-profit organization that has presence in the public life, expressing the interests and values of their members or others, based on ethical, cultural, scientific, religious or philanthropic considerations.”¹⁴ The act also constrains civil society to a limited scope of permissible activity. Organizations must have “the intention of undertaking voluntary or humanitarian projects.”¹⁵ State security forces regularly monitor the activities of civil society organizations that register under the NGO Act. Organizations that do not register may not receive the same type of monitoring but technically operate in violation of the legal constraints of the NGO Act.¹⁶

The act recognizes three categories of permitted civil society groups: international NGOs, national NGOs, and community-based organizations. This paper centers on the activities of national and community-based organizations and the informal networks and media organizations excluded from the NGO Act’s definition.

National organizations refer to a diverse set of faith-based organizations, independent media organizations, research think tanks, and advocacy, humanitarian, and charity groups.¹⁷ Most national organizations are involved in advocacy, lobbying, and awareness-raising on issues that include protection

⁹ “Informal Armies.”

¹⁰ “Informal Armies.”

¹¹ Interviews with representatives of civil society leaders, 2019.

¹² Interviews with representatives of civil society leaders, 2019.

¹³ Interviews with representatives of civil society leaders, 2019.

¹⁴ NGO Act, Government of South Sudan, 2016, https://www.icnl.org/wp-content/uploads/South-Sudan_NGOBILL.pdf.

¹⁵ NGO Act, Government of South Sudan.

¹⁶ Interview with Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC) representative, October 18, 2019.

¹⁷ Interview with RRC representative, October 18, 2019.

of human rights, community engagement and participation, humanitarian delivery, peace building and conflict prevention, and good governance and rule of law.¹⁸

Community-based organizations form around different groups associated with different levels of religious and ethnic identity. The NGO Act defines a community-based group as “a public or private, non-profit including religious entity, which is representative of a community or a significant segment of a community, and is engaged in meeting human, educational, environmental or public safety community needs.”¹⁹

Common levels of group identity around which these community-based organizations form are clans and subclans. Sixty-four tribes compose South Sudan’s population. In most cases, the tribes are subdivided into clans, and some clans are further divided into subclans. Dinka, the tribe with which Salva Kiir is affiliated, is subdivided into over 50 clans, such as Twic Mayaardit, Nyarweng, Ngok Lual Yak, Abyie Ngok, and the Dinka of Greater Bor. The subclans of the Dinka of Greater Bor, in turn, include Kongor, Awulian, and Abiong, among about 12 others. Associations, including groups for youth, women, and students, represent groups at the clan and subclan levels. For example, in the clan of Greater Bor, there is the Greater Bor Community Association and the Greater Bor Youth Association; at the subclan levels of Awulian and Duk, there are corresponding community, youth, and women associations.

These community associations focus on clan and subclan issues, including conflict prevention and resolution, humanitarian assistance, and basic service delivery. In 2019, for example, the Abuodit Youth Development Association organized a fundraising event in Juba to build a health center for its subclan. A coalition of the Greater Duk Community Association, the Duk Youth Association, and key Duk businessmen organized a fundraising event to support victims of a recent flood in the Duk area.²⁰

South Sudanese legal definitions of nongovernmental organizations are similar to conventional academic definitions that characterize civil society as a form of voluntary, nonpolitical association that contributes to democratic life and fosters social norms of trust and reciprocity.²¹ International organizations that interact with civil society organizations, such as the World Bank, often use this interpretation of civil society activity to guide their assistance.²²

Some scholars have attempted to broaden the definitions of civil society to include actors who play a more prominent role in African politics across country contexts. Stephen Orvis argues that civil society in African contexts includes actors, such as patron-client networks, ethnic associations, and traditional

¹⁸ Interview with RRC representative, October 18, 2019.

¹⁹ NGO Act, Government of South Sudan.

²⁰ Interview with the chairperson of Awulian Youth Association, May 10, 2019.

²¹ *The Oxford Handbook of Civil Society*, ed. Michael Edwards (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), <https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195398571.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780195398571>.

²² The World Bank, “Civil Society: Overview,” accessed March 27, 2020, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/about/partners/civil-society/overview>.

authorities, that liberal-democratic definitions typically exclude. Orvis defines civil society as the public sphere of formal and informal collective activities autonomous from the state and family.²³

In South Sudan, the government monitors and regulates civil society organizations, a practice which has led to harassment and limited political space within which groups can mobilize. For instance, security forces have killed, abducted, arrested, harassed, and threatened civil society advocates for reporting and speaking up against human rights abuses.²⁴ Also, security regulations require that civil society members acquire security clearance from the National Security Service (NSS) to organize public events.²⁵ Civil society groups report that conflict in South Sudan has polarized their networks and has given them little space for advocacy. In general, restrictions on their activities and division among civil society members have led to self-censorship among even the most vocal advocates.²⁶

These restrictions also lead to self-censorship by media organizations reporting about mass atrocities. A member of the Association for Media Development in South Sudan (AMDSS) said that media reporting about human rights abuses shies away from “calling a spade a spade, which [does] not save lives.”²⁷ These limits on reporting result in less public awareness about potential and ongoing atrocities: during the 2013 crisis, for example, “the public was not aware there was house-to-house killing” against specific groups.²⁸ Because of self-censorship by the main media, propaganda took over on social media, where some individuals displayed images of massacred bodies that took place in other countries and others posted hateful comments, which might have exacerbated the atrocities.²⁹

Some informal, elite networks, however, are able to maneuver within this limited civic space. High-level “committees”—typically comprising prominent local and national officials from faith-based or community groups—may form to address particular social problems. Formally registered groups often create informal coalitions of these prominent figures to ensure political protection for and to amplify their advocacy efforts on controversial topics such as conflict issues. These organizations are able to operate without legal protections because of the social status of their individual members and the breadth of member organizations.³⁰ Examples of these informal organizations include the South Sudan Civil Society Forum (SSCSF) in Juba, which is composed of over 200 national NGOs; the Peace Friends Network (PFN) in Wau, which encompassed over 45 national and community-based organizations; and the CCCP, which included a coalition of prominent church leaders, community representatives, and former government and military personnel.

²³ Stephen Orvis, “Civil Society in Africa or African Civil Society?” *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 36, no. 1 (2001): 17–38.

²⁴ Human Rights Watch, “World Report 2020: Rights Trends in South Sudan,” 2020, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2020/country-chapters/south-sudan>.

²⁵ Interviews with civil society representatives, 2019.

²⁶ Interview with the chairperson of Association for Media Development in South Sudan (AMDISS), April 2019.

²⁷ Interview with the AMDISS chairperson, April 2019.

²⁸ Interview with the AMDISS chairperson, April 2019.

²⁹ Interview with the AMDISS chairperson, April 2019.

³⁰ Interview with RRC representative, October 18, 2019.

Research Methods

This study uses comparative case study analysis based on semistructured interviews with formal and informal civil society leaders to understand the actions they took in the three cases described in this report. The three cases are (1) the SPLM leadership crisis in 2013, (2) a military standoff between President Salva Kiir and General Chief of Staff Paul Malong in November 2017, and (3) conflicts between local security forces in Wau from 2016 to 2017.

We selected these cases for three main reasons. First, the two national-level cases—the conflicts between Kiir and Machar and between Kiir and Malong—had broadly similar causes and involved similar types of civilian-led action, but they differed in their outcomes. The South Sudanese president accused both Machar and Malong of plotting coups against his administration and fired both by decree. In response to Kiir’s actions, both Machar and Malong mobilized factional militias against security forces affiliated with the SPLM.³¹ These similarities allow us to account for other factors that might explain variations in the effectiveness of civil society actions taken to prevent national-level conflicts. The Wau case, by contrast, involved a different type of conflict—local-level disputes between political actors rather than elite-level conflict—but similar types of civilian-led action. Similar patterns of early warning, public advocacy, and mediation allow us to assess whether civil society efforts were more effective in resolving elite-level versus local-level political disputes.

From May 3 to November 22, 2019, we interviewed members of formally registered nongovernmental and community-based organizations, informal coalition leaders, and researchers and analysts from think tanks and media organizations in Juba and Wau.

In Juba, we interviewed representatives from 18 civil society organizations, including five informal networks, coalitions, or forums; six nationally registered NGOs; three community-based organizations; and representatives from the CCCP and the South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC) in Juba. In Wau, we interviewed representatives from 16 civil society organizations and one informal civil society network. These groups work on issues that include peacebuilding, youth advocacy, women’s empowerment, and mediation.

In conducting our interviews, we relied on two separate semistructured interview guides for formally registered groups and informal networks in Juba and Wau. These interviews aimed to capture the full breadth of actions in which civil society actors across a range of sectors engaged during the 2013 and 2017 national crises and the more localized Wau crisis. We also developed an in-depth interview guide for key informants from the SSCC, the CCCP, and the High Committee for Peace and Reconciliation

³¹ Regional and international actors also issued sanctions against key leaders in the months surrounding both political crises. For sanctions actions during the 2013 leadership crisis, see Michael R. Gordon, “U.S. Imposes First Sanctions in South Sudan Conflict,” *The New York Times*, May 6, 2014, <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/07/world/africa/us-imposes-first-sanctions-in-south-sudan-conflict.html>. For sanctions actions in the run-up to the Kiir-Malong crisis, see Carol Morello, “U.S. Sanctions South Sudan Officials for Allegedly Enriching Themselves amid Civil War, Famine,” *Washington Post*, September 6, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/us-sanctions-south-sudan-officials-over-undermining-peace/2017/09/06/50b47bf4-92ff-11e7-aace-04b862b2b3f3_story.html.

(HCPR), a South Sudanese group, to better understand the role that each of these groups played during the respective crises.

Cases

In this section, we describe the three potential mass atrocity episodes, how civilians mobilized in response to risks of violence, and two main factors that explain variations in outcomes across cases. First, we analyze the proximate causes of political conflict and the different types of actions that civilians adopted in response to risks of violence. Second, we describe how the CCCP's prior experience in the prevention of political conflict and its common ethnic identity with Dinka leaders explain why the civilian group succeeded in resolving the Kiir-Malong crisis, while civilian-led efforts in the 2013 leadership and Wau cases did not succeed.

SPLM leadership crisis, late 2013

In July 2013, Salva Kiir issued a presidential decree dismissing Riek Machar, South Sudan's vice president, and all his cabinet and deputy ministers. Kiir also suspended Pagan Amum, the secretary general of the SPLM party, and Taban Deng, the governor of Unity State.³² The move came as a result of increased criticism of Kiir by the SPLM party and the possibility that Machar would contest the 2015 election amid speculation over whether Kiir would run.³³

The SPLM leadership crisis devolved into a military confrontation that led to violence against civilians in Juba, Bor, Malakal, and Bentiu. After an SPLM meeting on December 15, 2013, conflict broke out between factions of the SPLM. Over the next three days, the Presidential Guards and other armed forces conducted house-to-house searches for Nuer civilians and unarmed soldiers in the residential areas of Mia Saba, Khor William, Jebel, Newsite, Lologo, Gudele, Eden, and Mangaten.³⁴ In one incident at a Gudele

³² Abraham Awolich and Zachariah Diing Akol, "SPLM Leadership Contest: An Opportunity for Change or a Crisis of Governance?" (Policy brief, The Sudd Institute, Juba, 2013), <https://www.suddinstitute.org/publications/show/splm-leadership-contest>.

³³ Abraham A. Awolich, "SPLM's Internal Politics: A Catalyst to the Dissolution of Government" (Policy brief, The Sudd Institute, Juba, 2013), <https://www.suddinstitute.org/publications/show/splm-s-internal-politics-a-catalyst-to-the-dissolution-of-government>.

³⁴ United Nations Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR), "Conflict in South Sudan: A Human Rights Report" (UN Mission in South Sudan, Juba, 2014), <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/UNMISS%20Conflict%20in%20South%20Sudan%20-%20A%20Human%20Rights%20Report.pdf>.

joint operation center in Juba, 134 Nuer men were killed, some by suffocation.³⁵ Within a few days, SPLM-IO and the White Army retaliated by conducting house-to-house searches and killing Dinka civilians in Bor.³⁶ In one incident, the opposition forces in Bor town killed 22 Dinka women praying at St. Andrew's Catholic Cathedral. In a mosque in Bentiu, the opposition killed over 200 civilians, mostly Darfurians, on the basis that the Darfuri civilians were fighting alongside the government.³⁷ In Malakal, both the SPLM-IG and SPLM-IO targeted civilians on the basis of their ethnicity. Although precise death tolls for each location do not exist, a study from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine estimated that approximately 190,000 people were killed from 2013 to 2018 and more than 380,000 "excess deaths" occurred as a consequence of the crisis in the same period.³⁸ In addition to extrajudicial killings, both sides committed rape and destroyed property, leading tens of thousands of civilians to flee to United Nations (UN) bases and millions to seek refuge outside the country.³⁹ By 2018, the conflict had displaced about two million South Sudanese within South Sudan, and 2.5 million had fled to neighboring countries. At the time of writing, the UN's International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimates that about 203,000 people are now living in Protection of Civilians sites.⁴⁰

Civilian leaders attempted to coordinate direct talks between Kiir and Machar in late 2013, but these efforts failed to reconcile the two leaders before the political conflict escalated into full-fledged civil war. The SSCC, a coalition of prominent church officials and community leaders, led the key delegation to the divided South Sudanese officials.⁴¹ Although members of the SSCC had experience in facilitating dialogues to resolve intercommunal violence, such as Daniel Deng Bul's role in mediating the Nuer-Murle conflict in 2011, they lacked experience in mediating elite-level national conflicts.⁴² Interviews with SSCC members indicate that the coalition did not meet before their outreach to Kiir and Machar to strategize, analyze the problem, or discuss how best to approach the two parties. The delegation first met each leader separately, followed by a joint meeting between Kiir and Machar. During this joint meeting, Kiir and Machar told the SSCC delegation that the two leaders did not disagree with each other. When the

³⁵ African Union Commission of Inquiry on South Sudan (AUCISS), *Final Report of the African Union Commission of Inquiry on South Sudan* (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: AUCISS, 2014), <http://www.peaceau.org/uploads/auciss.final.report.pdf>.

³⁶ Fredrick Nzwili, "Female Church Workers Raped and Killed in South Sudan," *World Watch Monitor*, February 10, 2014, <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2014/02/female-church-workers-raped-and-killed-in-south-sudan/>.

³⁷ James Copnall, "Bentiu Massacre Highlights Continued Links between the Sudans after Divorce," *African Arguments*, May 8, 2014, <https://africanarguments.org/2014/05/08/bentiu-massacre-highlights-continued-links-between-the-sudans-after-divorce-by-james-copnall/>.

³⁸ Francesco Checchi et al., "Estimates of Crisis-Attributable Mortality in South Sudan, December 2013–April 2018: A Statistical Analysis" (Study, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, 2018), <https://reliefweb.int/report/south-sudan/estimates-crisis-attributable-mortality-south-sudan-december-2013-april-2018>.

³⁹ Human Rights Watch, "They Burned it All: Destruction of Villages, Killings, and Sexual Violence in Unity State South Sudan," New York, 2015, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2015/07/22/they-burned-it-all/destruction-villages-killings-and-sexual-violence-unity-state>.

⁴⁰ Ashley McLaughlin and Priscila Scalco, "South Sudan Protection of Civilian Sites: The Guiding Principles in Practice" (International Organization for Migration South Sudan, Juba, 2019), <https://southsudan.iom.int/content/south-sudan-protection-civilian-sites-guiding-principles-practice>.

⁴¹ These included Episcopal Archbishop Daniel Deng Bul, Presbyterian Moderator Peter Gai Lual Marrow, church leader Joseph Lokudu, former Vice President of Sudan Abiel Alier, and former government official Abdoun Agau.

⁴² United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), "Incidents of Inter-Communal Violence in Jonglei State," 2012, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/4feac8632.html>.

church leaders asked Kiir and Machar to organize a joint press conference, however, Machar asked the SSCC to deliver the public message.

Civilian actions in response to the violence that followed the 2013 leadership crisis included public warnings about the new risks of violence, public advocacy to regional and international third parties, humanitarian assistance, peacebuilding activities, and mediation. Following the dismissals of SPLM party members, some civil society organizations sent out several public early-warning messages cautioning that if the SPLM crisis were not managed, it could turn into a full-blown war. A political analyst in Juba predicted that a prolonged standoff between Kiir and his opponent could split the SPLM into two or more camps and heighten ethnic tensions.⁴³ Edmund Yakani of Community Empowerment for Progress Organization (CEPO) warned of political instability and called on the international community to intervene.⁴⁴ AMDISS, including editors and owners of leading media outlets, met in November 2013 and collectively decided to issue media messages of peace and early warning in the media. South Sudanese cartoonist Adija published a cartoon titled, “Battle for the Soul of the SPLM,” featuring SPLM leaders entering a SPLM National Liberation Council (NLC) meeting with spears and sticks and fleeing children asking their mother, “Are we going to be refugees again?” Pastors in the SSCC also issued a public warning of impending conflict that led to death threats and accusations that they were insulting political leaders, according to one interviewee.

Once the conflict broke out, AMDISS collectively decided to refrain from framing the conflict in ethnic terms and declined to publish death counts in an effort to avoid fueling further violence. The media hosted forums of community leaders to discuss how to prevent new recruitments in places like Sherkat in Juba. Additionally, the media engaged elders and influential leaders like former Southern Sudan President Abel Alier to give statements on the radio encouraging civilians to stop targeting each other along ethnic lines.⁴⁵ Some civilians in Juba, Malakal, and Bor responded by taking in their endangered neighbors.⁴⁶

Women’s organizations framed the conflict as a conflict between men, rather than as an ethnic conflict or a conflict between women, in an effort to present women as one tribe. The Women Monthly Forum⁴⁷ invited the Bentiu Women Network from Nuer, for example, to call for dialogue and the prevention of atrocities.⁴⁸ Women also travelled to the United States to appeal to Madam Angelina, the wife of Riek Machar, to use her influence to convince him to end the conflict.⁴⁹ On the ground, women’s block organizations distributed food, water, and clothing to the wounded in hospitals.⁵⁰

Church compounds in Juba, including the Seventh Day Adventist Church and the Catholic Church, and church compounds in Wau, including the Episcopal Church of South Sudan and the Catholic Church,

⁴³ Simon Tisdall, “South Sudan President Sacks Cabinet in Power Struggle,” *Guardian*, July 24, 2013, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jul/24/south-sudan-salva-kiir-sacks-cabinet>.

⁴⁴ Tisdall, “South Sudan President Sacks Cabinet.”

⁴⁵ Interview with the AMDISS chairperson, April 2019.

⁴⁶ Interview with the AMDISS chairperson, April 2019.

⁴⁷ Women Monthly Forum was formed to unify the voices of South Sudanese women at the national and local level with the women in the peace talks in Addis Ababa after the conflict in 2016.

⁴⁸ Interview with the coordinator of Women Monthly Forum, 2019.

⁴⁹ Interview with the coordinator of Women Monthly Forum, 2019.

⁵⁰ Interview with the chairperson of Women Bloc, 2019.

served as collection centers where fleeing citizens gathered before returning to their homes or being transferred to the UN's camps for internally displaced persons.⁵¹

At the political level, civil society networks focused on the peace talks in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. They lobbied the government to end hostilities and pressured the international community to enforce an arms embargo on the warring parties. South Sudan Action Network on Small Arms (SSANSA), a network of over 40 organizations, issued a joint advocacy letter with the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) appealing for an arms embargo from the UN Security Council and countries in the region.⁵² Members of the SSSCF also issued written statements and hosted radio talk shows demanding that the perpetrators of atrocities be brought to justice.⁵³

Civil society organizations nominated and sent several delegations to the peace talks as observers, accompanied by a five-person technical team for support.⁵⁴ At the peace talks in Addis Ababa, members of South Sudan Civil Society Alliance, an alliance of over 200 organizations, condemned the atrocities in Juba, Bor, and Malakal.⁵⁵

The SSSCF created an online campaign, titled “South Sudan Is Watching Campaign,” to advocate around the South Sudan peace talks in Addis Ababa. The campaign was supported by Norwegian People's Aid, OXFAM, and Justice Africa. African Union Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat noticed the campaign, and in his opening statement during the peace negotiations in Addis Ababa, he warned the warring parties that the South Sudanese people were watching them.⁵⁶

Military Standoff at General Malong's House (2017 Standoff)

On May 9, 2017, Kiir dismissed Malong from his position as general chief of staff with Republican Decree No.76/2017. Various explanations for his dismissal exist. Some argue that Malong was dismissed because senior military officials accused him of conducting an ethnic war against non-Dinkas. Others attribute his dismissal to an intelligence report purporting that he was planning a coup.⁵⁷

Upon his dismissal, Malong left Juba at night with a few soldiers, traveled through Eastern Lake States, and stopped in Yirol on the way to his hometown. The government speculated that he would stage a rebellion and demand that Malong return to Juba or face military confrontation.⁵⁸ In Yirol, Malong met

⁵¹ Interview with Archbishop of Northern Bhar al Ghazal Internal Province and Bishop of the Diocese of Wau, May 7, 2019.

⁵² Interview with the head of the Secretariat for the South Sudan Action Network on Small Arms (SSANSA), April 15, 2019.

⁵³ Interview with South Sudan Civil Society Forum (SSCSF) representative, May 2019.

⁵⁴ Interview with SSSCF representative, May 11, 2019.

⁵⁵ Interview with South Sudan Civil Society Alliance representative, April 16, 2019.

⁵⁶ Interview with SSSCF representative, May 11, 2019.

⁵⁷ APA News, “Gen. Paul Malong Awan to Return to Juba,” *Journal du Cameroun*, May 10, 2017, <https://www.journalducameroun.com/en/gen-paul-malong-awan-to-return-to-juba/>.

⁵⁸ “Eastern Lakes Governor Persuades Paul Malong to Return to Juba,” *Radio Tamazuj*, May 10, 2017, <https://radiotamazuj.org/en/news/article/eastern-lakes-governor-persuades-paul-malong-to-return-to-juba>.

with the governor, a “peace committee” of civil society advocates, and elders, who offered to mediate between Malong and the government.⁵⁹ This successful intervention convinced Malong to return to Juba to avoid an imminent military confrontation. To guarantee safety to Malong, Kiir held a press conference at J1, the presidential palace in Juba, and announced that he directed security agencies to ensure the protection of Malong and his soldiers.⁶⁰ Once Malong arrived in Juba, however, government forces put him under house arrest for seven months.⁶¹ The Minister of Defence stated that for security reasons, Malong “was not arrested, but he [is] confined.”⁶²

A military standoff ensued when Kiir ordered on October 30, that “all arms and ammunitions in possession of the former chief of general staff must all be removed from him forthwith.... Any resistance posed by the former chief of general staff must be met with reasonable force.”⁶³ Heavily armed government soldiers immediately surrounded Malong’s house in Juba. In an interview with Radio Tamazuj, Malong threatened that, “People will die if those people try to disarm us by force.”⁶⁴

Elders, government officials, the church, and CCCP participated in mediation efforts to resolve the 2017 standoff.⁶⁵ After the media warned of the looming conflict, the First Lady of South Sudan, Ayen Mayerdit, asked the elders what they could do to stop the crisis.⁶⁶ The elders agreed to mediate and organized themselves into the Concerned Citizens’ Committee for Peace. The CCCP’s nine members included elders, community leaders, church leaders, representatives of the military and presidency, and some members of Jieng Council of Elders (JCE).⁶⁷ The CCCP then organized meetings to strategize and created a clear leadership structure, objectives, and a strategy on how to persuade the leaders to avoid confrontation.⁶⁸

The group’s main objective was to avoid violence. Its concern was that Malong and his allies would not back down and that the standoff would explode, leading to unnecessary civilian deaths.⁶⁹ The second

⁵⁹ “Malong Says His Bodyguards Will Fight Back in Forcible Disarmament,” *Radio Tamazuj*, November 9, 2017, <https://radiotamazuj.org/en/news/article/beaking-malong-says-his-bodyguards-will-fight-back-in-forcible-disarmament>.

⁶⁰ Mathya, “Transcript: President Kiir’s Full Statement on Gen. Malong’s Dismissal,” *Eye Radio*, 2017, <https://eyeradio.org/transcript-president-kiirs-full-statement-gen-malongs-dismissal/>.

⁶¹ Mathya, “Transcript President Kiir’s Full Statement.”

⁶² Denis Dumo, “South Sudan's Sacked Army Chief ‘Confined’ to Juba Home, Minister Says,” Reuters, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-southsudan-military/south-sudans-sacked-army-chief-confined-to-juba-home-minister-says-idUSKCN1BB2M9>.

⁶³ “Heavily Armed Troops Surround Malong’s House in Juba,” *Radio Tamazuj*, November 3, 2017, <https://radiotamazuj.org/en/news/article/heavily-armed-troops-surround-malong-s-house-in-juba>.

⁶⁴ “Malong Says His Bodyguards Will Fight Back,” *Radio Tamazuj*.

⁶⁵ “Malong Says His Bodyguards Will Fight Back,” *Radio Tamazuj*.

⁶⁶ Community leaders, including Ambrose Riiny Thiik, chairman of the Jieng Council of Elders; Deng Macham, chairman of traditional leaders in South Sudan; and Garang Deng Aguer, an Aweil elder, also sounded the alarm to their constituencies.

⁶⁷ The members of the CCCP were General Albino Akol, Francis Deng, General Andrew Makur Thou, Hon. Joshua Dau Diu, Hon. Maker Thiong, Ambassador Bol Wek Agoth, General Lual Wek Guen, Hon. Oliver Majok Aleu, and Bishop Majok Dau.

⁶⁸ Initially, the chairperson of the group was Bishop Isaiah Majok Dau, but he had to travel abroad, so Deng, initially Dau’s deputy, assumed the leadership role in the committee and also became the spokesperson of the group.

⁶⁹ Interview with the CCCP chairperson, 2019.

objective was to prevent intra-Dinka violence, because some CCCP members believed that there was a growing anti-Dinka sentiment across the country, and they argued that if the standoff was not managed properly, many would welcome the division and bloodshed among the Dinka.

The CCCP then analyzed the root cause of the standoff. Was it a result of what Malong had done or of what Kiir feared he might do? What provoked the president to order the disarmament of Malong's bodyguards? Through analysis of these causes, the CCCP found that the conflict was actually not between Kiir and Malong but rather fueled by enemies of Malong who—resentful of prior mistreatment under Malong's hands—wanted him to clash with Kiir.

The CCCP's efforts resulted in the de-escalation of the conflict between Kiir and Malong as well as of intra-Dinka violence. Through the CCCP mediation, Malong and Kiir reached an agreement to end the weeklong standoff and prevent further conflict by their respective forces. Ayen Mayerdit also organized a prayer session for the elders who participated in the mediation effort, after which Kiir announced Malong's release. Malong pledged his readiness to work with Kiir. Although Malong later joined forces with the SPLM-Former Detainees faction and Thomas Cirillo's National Salvation Front, the mediation succeeded in preventing the escalation of violence by both sides of the conflict in the near term.⁷⁰

Wau Crisis, 2016–17

In 2016–17, the northwestern city of Wau experienced an increase in intercommunal violence that had its roots in the conflict between pastoralist Dinka Marial Bai and Luo and Fertit farming groups. In 2011, members of the Fertit ethnic group began a protest campaign against the provincial governor's decision to transfer the county headquarters from town. In response to continued protests, local security forces organized a crackdown in late 2012 that resulted in the deaths of nine people.⁷¹ The crisis also took on national dimensions in early 2013, when the NSS arrested more than 100 Fertit people for alleged support of the antigovernment protesters.⁷² A group of young Fertit people formed the Fertit Lions rebel group in response to the crackdown.

What began as a local rebellion quickly aligned with the cleavages of South Sudan's escalating national civil war. The Fertit Lions joined forces with the SPLM-IO in 2014, prompting a counterinsurgency campaign by South Sudanese government forces and a pro-government militia, Mathiang Anyoor, in Fertit residential areas.⁷³ As conflict actors multiplied by early 2016, civilians reported an uptick in

⁷⁰ International Crisis Group, "Salvaging South Sudan's Fragile Peace Deal" (Africa Report no. 270, Brussels, Belgium, 2019).

⁷¹ WBGD Diaspora Community in the Diaspora, "H.E. Salva Kiir Mayardit, President of the Republic of South Sudan: Act Quickly to Stop the Atrocities in Wau—Western Bahr El Ghazal State," Change.org petition, 2012, <https://www.change.org/p/h-e-salva-kiir-mayardit-president-of-the-republic-of-south-sudan-act-quickly-to-stop-the-atrocities-in-wau-western-bahr-el-ghazal-state>.

⁷² Sarah Vuylsteke, "Identity and Self-Determination: The Fertit Opposition in South Sudan" (Briefing paper, Small Arms Survey, Geneva, Switzerland, 2018), <http://www.smallarmssurveysudan.org/fileadmin/docs/briefing-papers/HSBA-BP-Fertit.pdf>.

⁷³ Darius Wani, "Dozens Killed during Clashes in Wau," *The Niles*, June 29, 2016, <https://www.theniles.org/en/articles/society/20321/>.

government-directed harassment and arrests of civil society activists.⁷⁴ These attacks also prompted retaliatory violence by Fertit Lions forces,⁷⁵ and attacks on civilians grew more severe as fighting between government and Fertit militia intensified. Rumors from opposing forces of potential violence were a recurring trigger for new atrocities from government forces, as seen in a massacre that took place in April 2017 that killed more than 24 civilians and displaced 8,000 people.⁷⁶

Civilian responses to potential risks of mass atrocities during the Wau conflict included peacebuilding dialogues and mediation. Before the conflict escalated in 2016, civil society organizations used various strategies, including drama programs, roundtable sessions, and cross-sector dialogues, to encourage Wau community members to work together to prevent conflict.⁷⁷ Cross-sector dialogues included members of the military, civilian leaders, and traditional authorities such as community elders, and women's organizations.⁷⁸ One women's organization set up cross-ethnic exchange programs to increase contact between groups on either side of the local conflict.⁷⁹ Additionally, civil society groups created informal "peace committees" to coordinate communication with provincial representatives such as the governor, Andrea Mayr Acho.⁸⁰

Following the April 2017 massacre, civilians also used public advocacy and early warning efforts to mitigate potential new atrocities. A group of 45 formal civil society organizations, for example, created the Peace Friends Community for Development to facilitate communication with local leaders and call for accountability for perpetrators of mass atrocities, which led to the Wau government's decision to increase police presence in residential areas.⁸¹ Also, groups such as Change Maker South Sudan and Community Aid for Relief and Development Organization (CARDO) formed to monitor rumors and early signs of potential attacks on civilians.⁸² In addition, women's networks such as Jamia group, which is a community of 15 to 30 women, formed to share information about potential atrocity risks, both with community members and with government officials.⁸³ Many respondents from Wau suggested that these resources led to a reduction in attacks on violence against civilians.⁸⁴

In response to community requests in 2017, the governor formed the High Committee for Peace and Reconciliation (HCPR). Thirty-five women and men were selected to address insecurity in Wau and

⁷⁴ Darius Wani, "Human Remains Discovered in Wau," *The Niles*, May 30, 2016, <https://www.theniles.org/en/articles/society/20279/>.

⁷⁵ Wani, "Dozens Killed."

⁷⁶ "South Sudan: Civilians Killed in Wau Fighting," *Al Jazeera*, April 10, 2017, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/04/south-sudan-civilians-killed-wau-fighting-170410182833372.html>.

⁷⁷ Interview with the executive director of Unity Culture and Development Center, May 5, 2019.

⁷⁸ Interview with Community Empowerment for Progress Organization (CEPO) coordinator in Wau, May 5, 2019.

⁷⁹ Interview with the executive director of Women Training and Promotion (WATOP), May 6, 2019.

⁸⁰ Interview with the chairperson of Peace Friends, May 7, 2019.

⁸¹ Interview with CEPO representative, 2019; interview with Peace Friends representative, 2019.

⁸² Interview with the chairperson of Change Maker South Sudan, 2019.

⁸³ Interview with Jamia group representative, 2019.

⁸⁴ Interview with WATOP representative, 2019; interview with CEPO representative, 2019; interview with Peace Friends representative, 2019.

engage the opposition in talks, but respondents suggested that the talks had little effect in preventing or mitigating atrocities.

When these mitigation efforts fell short, civil society organizations also provided direct humanitarian assistance to civilians in Wau fleeing imminent violence. Local faith-based groups were instrumental: Christian Action for Relief and Development (CARD) provided emergency humanitarian support to displaced persons from across multiple ethnic groups.⁸⁵ The IOM estimates that Catholic churches in Wau provided sanctuary to 83,800 civilians from April 10 to 12.⁸⁶

Comparative analysis

Two main factors shaped the outcomes of the three instances of civilian-led efforts to prevent or mitigate mass atrocities: (1) the extent to which individual leaders had prior experience in the prevention of violent conflict and (2) the relationship between the ethnic identities of conflict actors and the actors involved in civilian-led mediation efforts.

In South Sudan, both government and rebel leaders grant greater prestige to those actors who have skill and seniority derived from past experience with preventing and resolving political conflict. Such prior experience contributed to the CCCP's successful mediation attempt in the 2017 military standoff at Malong's house. The CCCP was headed by Francis Deng (a prominent South Sudanese scholar and ambassador to the United Nations) and included experienced community leaders and elders such as the president of the traditional leaders in South Sudan, members of the JCE, and church leaders. These leaders had knowledge of the local context and experience in community conflict prevention. Supported by an experienced team, the CCCP effectively analyzed the problem, identified root causes, set out clear objectives, and designed a strategy to prevent further conflict. Lessons learned from past mediation experiences led Deng to ensure that all voices on the committee were heard during meetings with Kiir. Additionally, the CCCP emphasized the importance of having the mediation efforts be locally driven, even though United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) was following the situation closely.⁸⁷

In contrast, the SSCC team that mediated the 2013 SPLM leadership crisis lacked sufficient experience to articulate a clear structure, objectives, and strategy for mediation. Historically, the church in South Sudan was known for providing humanitarian services and conflict resolution between local communities, such as helping to negotiate a resolution to the Murle insurgency in 2014.⁸⁸ However, it lacked experience in the successful prevention of political conflict between South Sudanese elites at the national level.

In the Wau conflict, the HCPR's mediation efforts between the government and the opposition failed in part due to a lack of experience preventing political conflict. HCPR's experience in preventing community conflict, however, allowed them to build trust and confidence among the communities. Unlike Francis Deng, who had international and national experience in the prevention of political conflict, Paul

⁸⁵ Interview with chairperson of Christian Aid for Relief and Development (CARD) representatives, May 6, 2019.

⁸⁶ "8,000 Displaced by Recent Violence in S. Sudan's Wau State," *Sudan Tribune*, April 12, 2017, https://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?iframe&page=imprimable&id_article=62174.

⁸⁷ Interview with CCCP chairperson, 2019.

⁸⁸ James Jeffrey, "Church and Conflict in South Sudan," *Inter Press Service*, July 3, 2018, <https://reliefweb.int/report/south-sudan/church-and-conflict-south-sudan>.

Atuk Chaw, the chair of HCPR, had experience in prevention and management of community disputes through local mechanisms and courts.⁸⁹ As such, the committee focused on local peace initiatives among Luo, Fertit, and Dinka tribes within Wau, mapping where effective peace rallies could be held in Wau.⁹⁰ When it came to mediating peace between the opposition and government, the committee relied heavily on the possibility of UNMISS support—a factor in this case that differed from Deng’s insistence on UNMISS’s non-involvement in mediating the Kiir-Malong dispute. After the failure of the UNMISS mediation attempt, some religious leaders who were members of the committee established contact with opposition leaders, but still the committee did not take other steps to proceed with mediation process. Had the committee allowed religious leaders to establish contact with the opposition early on, the outcome of the mediation may have been different.⁹¹

In addition to these social and professional backgrounds, common ethnic identities allowed civil society leaders to frame conflict as a threat to an ethnic in-group. Although ethnic divisions are not the sole cause of conflict in South Sudan, the SPLM split in 2013 reinforced a longstanding divide between Dinka and Nuer communities. Throughout the civil war, Dinka leaders often described Nuer insurgents as a threat to Dinka political authority. As a result of these narratives about the threat posed by Nuer insurgents, leaders who relied on narratives of intra-ethnic solidarity were better able to convince leaders of the advantages of restraint than those who attempted to resolve leadership crises across ethnic boundaries.

The 2017 Malong standoff is the only one of the three cases in which civil society leaders and the major conflict actors shared a common ethnicity. In 2017, CCCP leaders consciously used the common ethnic identity between the civil society network and the two conflict parties, and between the conflict parties themselves, as a primary talking point in their mediation efforts. In their rhetoric, the committee cited Dinka cultural values and traditions, such as folk songs, to remind Kiir and Malong of the obligations of leadership in Dinka tradition.⁹² Also, Justice Ambrose Riiny Thiik, chairman of the JCE was quoted in the media stating that, “Brothers can disagree and quarrel but would always remain one. The factors that unite us are much greater than those that seek to divide us.”⁹³

During the 2013 crisis, by contrast, the SSCC framed its mediation campaign as a cross-ethnic effort that included representatives from Dinka, Nuer, and Equatoria groups. Despite the church’s reputation for impartiality, perceptions of cross-ethnic divisions weakened the SSCC’s position as a mediator.⁹⁴ One interviewee noted, in particular, that the appointment of Episcopal Archbishop Daniel Deng Bul, a prominent Dinka community leader with close ties to the South Sudanese government, to head the National Committee for Peace, Reconciliation and Healing (NCPRH) “brought division within the church.”⁹⁵

⁸⁹ Interviews with five members of HCPR, November 25–26, 2019.

⁹⁰ Interviews with five members of HCPR, November 25–26, 2019.

⁹¹ Interviews with five members of HCPR, November 25–26, 2019.

⁹² “Dinka Council of Elders Says Working to Defuse Tense Situation in Juba,” *Radio Tamazuj*, November 9, 2017, <https://radiotamazuj.org/en/news/article/dink-council-of-elders-says-working-to-defuse-tense-situation-in-juba>.

⁹³ “Dinka Council of Elders,” *Radio Tamazuj*.

⁹⁴ Interview with the chairperson of SSCC, 2019.

⁹⁵ Interviews with representatives of civil society leaders, 2019.

Conclusion

This paper uses three cases of civilian-led actions—the 2013 SPLM leadership crisis, the 2017 military standoff between Salva Kiir and Paul Malong, and the local-level conflict in Wau state—to explore the factors that explain variations in the outcomes of civilian-led action to prevent and mitigate mass atrocities. Comparing civilian-led mediation efforts during the first two cases allows us to assess the factors that explain variations in the success of civilian-led actions. The Wau case, by contrast, enables us to assess whether these similar strategies have a similar effect on national-level, elite conflicts versus conflicts involving more local drivers. We found that civilian leaders' prior experience in the prevention of political conflict and the common ethnic identity of civilian leaders explain why the civilian-led attempt to mediate between Kiir and Malong was successful in preventing the immediate escalation of violence, while the 2013 leadership crisis response and the Wau case were not.

In addition to these mediation efforts, civil society organizations organized diverse actions to prevent and mitigate mass atrocities. These included public warnings, both among local networks and to regional and international audiences, direct humanitarian assistance to civilians in need, and advocacy efforts to influence peace talks. These strategies were common across all three cases, and we did not observe that any one strategy was more effective in preventing or mitigating national-level versus local-level conflicts.

These cases also demonstrate the significant constraints on civil society activity in South Sudan. The SSCC and the CCCP, the civil society networks in the two national-level cases, were able to take informal actions to prevent and mitigate atrocities in large part because of the political prominence of their members. Organizations with fewer ties to the ruling SPLM party faced then, and continue to face now, more significant obstacles to political action, including repression, harassment, and pressure to self-censor public communications.

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Appendix: Interviews

1. Interview with Chairperson of SSSC. (April 15, 2019).
2. Interview with South Sudan Civil Society Alliance Representative. (April 16, 2019).
3. Interview with Executive Director of Women Training and Promotion (WATOP). (May 6, 2019).
4. Interview with Archbishop of Northern Bhar al Ghazal Internal Province and Bishop of the Diocese of Wau. (May 7, 2019).
5. Interview with Chairperson of Christian Aid for Relief and Development (CARD) Representatives. (May 6, 2019).
6. Interview with Concerned Citizen Committee for Peace (CCCCP) Chairperson. (April 10, 2019).
7. Interview with Community Empowerment for Progress Organization (CEPO) representative. (May 5, 2019).
8. Interview with the Chairperson of Change Maker South Sudan. (May 5, 2019).
9. Interview with Jamia group representative. (May 7, 2019).
10. Interview with the Chairperson of Peace Friends. (May 7, 2019).
11. Interview with Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC) Representative. (October 18, 2019).
12. Interview with Head of the Secretariat for South Sudan Action Network on Small Arms (SSANSA). (April 15, 2019).
13. Interview with South Sudan Civil Society Forum (SSCSF) Representative. (November 2019).
14. Interview with the Chairperson of Association for Media Development in South Sudan (AMDISS). (April 2019).
15. Interview with the Chairperson of Women Bloc Representative. (April 15, 2019).
16. Interview with the Coordinator of Women Monthly Forum. (April 18, 2019).
17. Interviews with representatives of civil society leaders. (April 2019).
18. Interviews with five members of the High Committee of Peace and Reconciliation (HCPR) (November 25–26, 2019).
19. Interview with the Chairperson of Awulian Youth Association. (May 10, 2019).

About the Author

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