



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

# **Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development**

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FAAE • NUMBER 114 • 1st SESSION • 42nd PARLIAMENT

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**EVIDENCE**

**Monday, November 5, 2018**

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**Chair**

**Mr. Michael Levitt**



# Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development

Monday, November 5, 2018

• (1530)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Levitt (York Centre, Lib.)):** I call the meeting to order.

Good afternoon, colleagues. This is the 114th meeting of the foreign affairs committee. We are continuing our work of the study on the situation in Somalia, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

We are going to hear from two witnesses in the first hour. By teleconference, we have Nuur Mohamud Sheekh, senior political affairs officer, peace and security division, from the Intergovernmental Authority on Development. From the United Nations Security Council, we have Renifa Madenga, humanitarian affairs expert, panel of experts on South Sudan, joining us from Washington by video conference. Thank you to you both.

Mr. Sheekh, I'm going to suggest that we begin with you because we know how fraught these phone lines can be sometimes.

Mr. Sheekh, because we can't see you, if you have a question during the discussion and the question period, please make yourself heard. Then I will know you are waiting to provide comments when we get to that point.

We will begin with your eight to 10 minutes, then we will go to Madam Madenga.

**Mr. Nuur Mohamud Sheekh (Senior Political Affairs Officer, Peace and Security Division, Intergovernmental Authority on Development):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman and distinguished honourable members.

I very much welcome this opportunity to address you on the recent successfully concluded High Level Revitalization Forum on the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. The acronym I will be using for this is ARCSS.

This is my first presentation to the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, and I appreciate the opportunity.

Almost one and a half years ago, the IGAD assembly mandated the High Level Revitalization Forum of the South Sudanese parties and the stakeholders to discuss concrete measures to restore a permanent ceasefire to achieve a full and inclusive implementation of the agreement, and to develop a revised and realistic timeline and

implementation schedule towards a democratic election at the end of the transitional period.

The assembly further mandated the IGAD Council of Ministers to convene and facilitate this process.

I'm happy to inform you this evening, Mr. Chairman, that the IGAD member states, together with the support of the international community, have successfully come to the end of this noble process with all the South Sudan parties and stakeholders appending their signatures to the revitalized ARCSS. The agreement was signed at an IGAD summit in Addis Ababa on September 12 of this year.

Mr. Chairman, honourable members, I would like to take this opportunity to highlight our achievements, challenges and outcomes to this august House. I will make these remarks very short.

I will highlight some of the key progress made following the IGAD council decision at the 32nd extraordinary session held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on June 21, during which they *inter alia* mandated President Omar Hassan al-Bashir to facilitate the second round of face-to-face discussions between President Salva Kiir Mayardit and Dr. Riek Machar Teny to discuss and resolve the outstanding issues on governance and security arrangements, including measures proposed in the revised regional proposals of the IGAD Council of Ministers.

Mr. Chairman, in accordance with the IGAD council decision above, the Khartoum round of talks was launched on June 25 of this year as a continuation of the two phases of the HLRF and the face-to-face talks held here in Addis Ababa. The Khartoum talks followed the signing of the Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities, Protection of Civilians and Humanitarian Access, signed on December 22, 2017, and the initialling of several agreed-on governance and security issues that had been accomplished here in Addis Ababa. The Khartoum talks, including a round of face-to-face meetings held in Entebbe, Uganda, quickly produced results, including an agreement between the two principals, His Excellency President Salva Kiir Mayardit and former first vice-president, His Excellency Riek Machar Teny to work together to end the conflict.

Prior to the currently revitalized ARCSS 2018, the South Sudanese parties and the stakeholders had concluded several agreements.

First was the Khartoum Declaration of Agreement Between Parties of the Conflict of South Sudan, signed on June 27, 2018.

Second was the agreement on the outstanding transitional security arrangements, signed on July 6, 2018.

Third, the agreement on the outstanding governance issues for the transitional period was signed on July 25, 2018.

Finally, the agreement on the outstanding issues on governance was signed on August 5, 2018.

Mr. Chairman, the signing of the full text of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan on September 3 was a milestone and marks an end to formal negotiations on the HLRF.

The revitalized agreement was also preceded by the initialling of the agreement and by the development of a comprehensive implementation matrix, which were also initialled on September 2 of this year, as well as by the convening of the security arrangement workshop from September 3 to September 5, 2018. The outcome of this workshop was also initialled by the parties.

The HLRF has been an all-inclusive process that enabled all parties to the agreement on the resolution of this conflict—including the estranged groups and other South Sudanese stakeholders, faith-based groups, South Sudanese refugees, civil society organizations, women and youth—to participate in the process.

• (1535)

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members, now briefly allow me to update you on some of the IGAD assembly decisions.

The assembly has decided that until his final status is determined at the upcoming ordinary summit of the IGAD assembly, the SPLM-IO leader, Dr. Riek Machar Teny shall be allowed to stay in a country of his choice in the region.

The assembly also resolves that IGAD shall engage the United Nations Security Council to ensure that the regional protection force is fully deployed to execute its mandate in accordance with the UN Security Council's resolutions 2304 in 2016 and 2406 in 2018, and shall request a further review of its mandate to allow Sudan, Uganda, Djibouti and Somalia as guarantors to contribute forces to enhance the protection and security throughout the implementation of this agreement.

The council further mandates the IGAD chiefs of staff to assess the operational needs and elaborate the necessary tasks of the RPF, the Regional Protection Force, in light of the current situation on the ground, and the prospective expansion as the basis for securing an endorsement from the African Union Peace and Security Council and the UN Security Council.

Mr. Chairman and honourable members, as I conclude, allow me to congratulate all the South Sudanese parties for conducting their talks in good faith and for their determination and resilience.

At IGAD we will work closely with all the political stakeholders in the country as well as regional and international partners for an inclusive, impartial and honest implementation of this agreement. The signing of the agreement in September was not forced upon the parties. It shows an act of compromise and leadership.

We at IGAD are hopeful for the future, though we do not underestimate the task ahead. The announcement to release more political prisoners and the call to open humanitarian access routes

and to allow free movement of people are important indicators that the parties are willing and able to make compromises.

That key opposition leaders came to Juba just last week after a long absence to share the podium in the spirit of compromise and national solidarity is a public signal that the much-needed vision of trust and inclusive implementation of the agreement is under way. The implementation of this agreement has begun in earnest, and key implementation institutions for governance, security and monitoring have been established.

We thank with our whole heart the African Union Commission, the United Nations, the European Union, Troika countries, China, Japan, Canada and IPF members for their contribution to this process.

The Government of Canada has provided generous funding to IGAD for this process and its implementation.

Mr. Chairman, finally I want to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to you for this opportunity to brief this distinguished select committee, and I look forward to closely working with you in implementing the revitalized agreement. Rebuilding South Sudan and responding to the current dire humanitarian situation and security challenges requires our collective action.

I thank you.

• (1540)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Sheekh. We're now going to move straight to Ms. Madenga.

**Ms. Renifa Madenga (Humanitarian Affairs Expert, Panels of Experts on South Sudan, United Nations Security Council, As an Individual):** Thank you.

It is an honour to address the standing committee today. I would also like to thank Mr. Sheekh, my colleague, for sharing the panel with me.

I want to indicate up front that I'm coming here not in my capacity as the humanitarian expert on the panel of South Sudan; I'm here in my personal capacity.

I thank you, Mr. Chair, for the introductory remarks. I will be referring to the humanitarian work I've done in the region in South Sudan and why I think this is a privilege and an opportunity. I want to share with the committee some of the observations on South Sudan.

I've worked in South Sudan since 2014 with a commission on fact-finding, the AU-UN Women's Committee. I have also worked with the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, in 2016. Now I'm with the panel of experts.

The views I'm sharing are the views of an ordinary person going to South Sudan. We have seen people sick and tired of the humanitarian situation in South Sudan. When I visited South Sudan in 2014, there was a crisis. When I went back in 2016, people were very tired. When I went back in October of this year, I found that the ordinary people were very weary. I'm talking about my observations on the ordinary people in South Sudan.

Our mandate as a panel of experts also gives us the privilege of talking to different categories of people. When I was talking to the most vulnerable boys and girls, men and women, people who have seen the protracted crisis in South Sudan, they made pertinent observations that I want to share with the Standing Committee today.

In the area of human rights matters, the study that the Standing Committee is working on is very important. You're undertaking a study so that all of Canada can better address the issues of conflict, peace, gender-based violence, security and justice. You are also looking at respect for human rights and at the economic development in South Sudan.

My address today will try to address some of the issues you are looking into.

I will start with the humanitarian situation in South Sudan.

My colleague has already explained in detail the revitalized agreement that was signed on September 12, 2018. As we talk now, there is supposed to be peace in South Sudan. However, I want to highlight the disparity between the peace talks and the reality.

I was engaged in meetings with South Sudanese authorities, the international diplomatic community, the United Nations entities, and some ordinary people in the streets of South Sudan. The public highlighted the plight the ordinary people were going through.

The humanitarian situation in South Sudan is serious. Despite the political progress, which we should all be celebrating, the ordinary South Sudanese people have been suffering since December 2013, and they continue to suffer now.

Some of the issues that are very pertinent in this crisis include conflict-related sexual violence and also gender-based violence.

● (1545)

From the beginning of the conflict in South Sudan, sexual violence has been a very serious issue. The crisis, protracted as it is, has been characterized by a lot of sexual violence. This has affected boys. It has affected men. It has affected women. It has affected girls. It has affected ordinary people, and it continues to affect them now.

People might relate to conflict-related sexual violence as part of the armed conflict, but even during the peace process there are incidents documented of people exposed to conflict-related sexual violence. There are also incidents of gender-based violence.

For us to carefully understand the situation in South Sudan, especially as it relates to gender-based violence, I think it is important for us to remember that even during the South Sudan conflict, there was a lot of reported and documented conflict-related sexual violence, and that with regard to South Sudan, we are looking at a society that is very militarized, a patriarchal society in which the status of women is determined by patriarchal values and other traditional values.

When I say that ordinary people who have been exposed to both conflict-related sexual violence and gender-based violence are weary, I actually mean that it goes back to what happened before 2011. It then goes to the crisis that started in 2013, and it now goes beyond the peace talks in 2015. Between those periods of peace talks, the reality is that people are still exposed to conflict-related

sexual violence and also to gender-based violence in the form of early marriages and in the form of domestic violence.

Then we also come to one of the aspects that you are looking at in this study: justice. In all the visits I have made to South Sudan, civilians in particular have been calling for accountability for gross human rights violations and violations of principles of international humanitarian law and human rights law that have been perpetrated in South Sudan since 2013.

There has been a lot of impunity, but there has been very limited accountability. Recently we were celebrating the Terrain case, in which at least some people were brought to justice. However, the majority of South Sudanese have not seen justice done. They have not seen the atrocities addressed. They have not seen accountability in terms of the lives they lost—those who were near and dear to them—or the malicious injury to their properties.

Now as we talk about peace and the fact that internally displaced persons should be resettled, should be rehabilitated, should go back to their homes, the question for some of them is where they can go.

When I visited South Sudan in October, that was one of the issues raised by ordinary people I talked to—ordinary men, women and young people who actually knew that as we talked about peace, their homes in Bor, Malakal and Yei were occupied by persons, some of whom allegedly perpetrated offences against them, so the humanitarian situation is still very serious, and it is also a serious concern.

● (1550)

Then we also talk about respect for human rights in South Sudan. The human rights paradigm has been very problematic. In that regard, I would urge the international community, including Canada, to look at interventions that can address and redress the situation on the ground.

One aspect of the recommendations would go to supporting human rights defenders. They've been doing a lot of work. They've been documenting a lot of atrocities. They need capacity-building if accountability is going to be realized, maybe through the hybrid court, which was recommended in 2014. There has been an inordinate delay in actually bringing it into operation to implement the recommendations relating to the hybrid court.

There are certain areas that also need a lot of intervention. During the October visit we saw people who need food, so the food insecurity issue is a very serious issue in South Sudan. In that regard I urge the standing committee to look into ways of supporting the agencies on the ground, either governmental organizations or local groups that are trying to redress and address the issue on the ground.

There are other issues relating to unemployment, relating to other human rights violations, on which I would urge the international community, and Canada in particular, to take initiatives to help the local people, to empower them to stand up and address the issues that are very pertinent in the situation of South Sudan.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Ms. Madenga.

We will go straight to questions, and we will start with MP Aboutaif, please.

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC):** Thank you very much for appearing before the committee today.

I'm quite familiar with the situation in South Sudan. I have a good-sized community from the South Sudan, but also from north Sudan. I was going to ask you the question about what can be done and what should be done, but I'm going to change the dynamic of the question a little bit.

We know that you mentioned accountability, and you mentioned there are some measures that the United Nations sanctions took under resolution 2428 in 2018, which they renewed until May 2019, and that there were also financial and travel measures under resolution 2406, which extended the mandate until July 2019. You also mentioned that a lot of things need to be done, as if we need to start all over again.

If I ask about the priority—this question is for both of you—how do we set the priorities, and where should we start to be more effective as an international community and as Canada? As I said, there are human rights violations at all levels. There's food insecurity, as you called it. There's so much that needs to be done. There are the institutions. The list goes on and on, but what priorities are to be taken immediately in order to be able to at least be effective and try to stop what's happening there and stop the bleeding, if I could put it in that fashion?

**Mr. Nuur Mohamud Sheekh:** I can try to respond to your questions.

It is a very good question. It's also a weighty question. There are no easy answers.

The humanitarian situation in South Sudan, as has been referred to by Ms. Madenga, is dire. There are security challenges and violations that are there.

What I can say is that since the high-level revitalization forum began six months ago, there is evidence that violations, especially fighting in South Sudan, have been significantly reduced.

In our sustained engagement in South Sudan at the highest level in the region, all of the state governments who are engaged engaged the warring parties at the highest levels, putting pressure on them to abstain from violating the ceasefire arrangement. That, by and large, has also worked to a great extent.

The issue of political prisoners was a thorny issue. In the agreement they made it very clear that as a confidence-building measure, political prisoners have to be released. This has happened. On the 31st of last month, just last week, the former vice-president made a visit to Juba with President Omar al-Bashir. The Ugandan president also was in Juba, President Yoweri Museveni.

There is confidence building. I'm not saying that the task ahead is easy. What we are seeing, since we engaged in this process, is that the hostilities are diminishing. In Juba last week, all the political parties—all of them, without exception—were there.

What can be done? As regions and members of the international community, we should continue engaging these parties. Disengaging from this process is not an option. If we disengage, these parties will again relapse into conflict and violence.

It's very important, committee, that Ms. Madenga also alluded to the humanitarian situation. The situation of food insecurity in South Sudan is dire. We should continue funding those local organizations that provide food to local populations, especially in those hard-to-reach areas, with the opening up of humanitarian access.

The return of IDPs is very important. Finding proper solutions for these populations is very important. The region has graciously hosted them as hosts. They had a million plus refugees; they took a quarter of a million refugees coming in. Most of them wish to return back to their home areas. We should work hand in hand to make sure we find a durable solution for this situation.

Security arrangements in South Sudan are very important. A whole chapter of this peace agreement, chapter 2, is on security arrangements. We are talking about demobilization of the armed groups and reintegration. This is not an easy undertaking. The dialogue on this aspect is ongoing as we speak. Canada and the international community should also try to work with us in tandem. That is the only way we can stabilize South Sudan and help that country return to normalcy.

Thank you.

● (1555)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Sheekh.

We'll now move to MP Saini, please.

**Mr. Raj Saini (Kitchener Centre, Lib.):** Thank you, both of you, for being here today and enlightening us on this very important topic.

Ms. Madenga, I want to start with you, because of some of the opening comments you made. You talked about the violence in South Sudan.

I wanted to build on that because, as you know, in July 2018 there was a UN arms embargo against South Sudan. At that time, when the embargo was announced, the first person to come forward was the President of Uganda, Mr. Museveni, who said not to worry about the sanctions—he would help skirt them. He said he would provide arms to South Sudan as needed.

There are right now eight people in the South Sudanese leadership who face UN sanctions. However, four countries—Ethiopia, Sudan, Kenya and Uganda—have not enforced those sanctions.

With the UN arms embargo and the violence that's happening now in South Sudan, what is the situation since you were there in October?

● (1600)

**Ms. Renifa Madenga:** Thank you very much for the question.

I will start by highlighting that in view of the peace processes, the priority now is the cessation of all hostilities so that all guns are actually quietened and that people start to live normally in a situation of sustainable peace. That is the way to sustainable peace.

I come now to the mandate of the Panel of Experts on South Sudan, which was extended pursuant to Security Council resolution 2428 on July 13, 2018, which you have referred to. I want to highlight that now, with the arms embargo and the other activities related to the mandate, it is our view that we will continue examining and analyzing the information on the ground. We will continue implementing the sanctions regime, making sure that those targeted by the sanction measures are actually monitored and investigated, and that resolution 2428 is applied to the situation in order to address and redress the situation on the ground.

I want to comment specifically on the area of humanitarian and human rights measures. The designation criteria of the sanctions regime also include targeting those who are targeting civilians or planning, directing or committing acts of violation. The sanctions regime is actually complementing, in a material way, all the peace processes so that there is humanitarian assistance. You referred to food insecurity, and there is access to areas where people are in need of food.

I think all those measures are actually complementing the peace process.

**Mr. Raj Saini:** Mr. Sheekh, I'd like to ask you a question.

Can you hear me?

**Mr. Nuur Mohamud Sheekh:** I can hear you.

**Mr. Raj Saini:** The question I'd like to ask you is this. I know you've been involved with IGAD. In the last revitalized agreement that was signed, you signed that agreement based on the support of the Troika, the support of the President of Uganda, and also the support of the President of Sudan.

Is that true?

**Mr. Nuur Mohamud Sheekh:** That's correct, sir.

**Mr. Raj Saini:** We have a problem here because the Sudanese president, Mr. al-Bashir, has been charged with war crimes at the International Criminal Court. You know that nine ceasefires have come into place since the formation of South Sudan.

What confidence do you have that this latest peace process will actually work, especially when some of the opposition was not included in the discussions,?

**Mr. Nuur Mohamud Sheekh:** Sir, if I may correct the assumption you made that not all the opposition groups were included in the peace process, the postscript of this peace process is that all the opposition groups have been included. The South Sudan Opposition Alliance, other political parties, and SPLM-IO were all included in this peace agreement.

Second, the heads of states and governments of IGAD, in June of this year, and the chair of IGAD, together with his colleagues, asked President Omar Hassan al-Bashir to try to narrow the differences between these groups, and to his credit, he has successfully done that.

However, one thing I may say is that this conflict in South Sudan was hatching a dire situation for the economy in the region. The oil was not flowing, so it was hurting them. Uganda's economy was also relying heavily on South Sudan, because Uganda was providing goods and services to South Sudan, so it was hurting them. Also,

Uganda is hosting a large number of South Sudan refugees, so the region, honourable member, as you can see, has been negatively affected, and this has brought the regional leaders to come together to address the implications and consequences of this conflict.

What we are seeing is that all the leaders are engaged in this process in good faith, in good spirit, and as an organization we have faith in the outcome of this process and the agreement and we hope that it will work. The Troika statements have been consistent that they are going to support the implementation of this process. Canada has just given us funding of \$140,000 towards the implementation of this agreement.

All signs from within the region and from our intelligence are this agreement will hold.

Thank you.

• (1605)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

We will now move to Madame Laverdière, *s'il vous plaît*.

[Translation]

**Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I would like to thank both witnesses for their presentation.

Mr. Sheekh, you mentioned that all parties participated in the peace process negotiations, including women.

Our committee did a study on the role of women in peace processes. I think all committee members are convinced that the participation of women in peace processes makes peace agreements more sustainable.

Could you provide us with more information as to women's participation in the process? How was it organized? Was it done with civil society groups?

[English]

**Mr. Nuur Mohamud Sheekh:** Thank you very much for that question, Madam.

The HLRF process is different from the previous peace process of 2015. In the HLRF and council participation, we expanded participation of the various stakeholders, including adherents, eminent personalities, and women's groups. The women's groups were very active, and it's not just one women's group—there are a number of them.

Also, after the process was concluded on September 12, the agreement established institutions and mechanisms for the implementation of this agreement. We encouraged the political parties to nominate women for some of the institutions and mechanisms established by this agreement.

I wouldn't say that a good number of women were nominated by political parties, despite our encouraging them to do so, but the political parties did nominate a number of women for these institutions. I would not look at this in isolation from what is happening in the wider IGAD region, as you will all know that Ethiopia recently appointed a woman as the president of the country for the first time. She was also in Juba last week during this peace celebration, which is continuing to encourage the parties to nominate women to more positions in the government, and all the parties and the governments are very receptive.

I'd also like to thank the Government of Canada for providing funding to UN Women. UN Women have seconded a staff person to IGAD as our gender adviser. The salary of that senior official is paid by your government, and we thank you.

Thank you.

● (1610)

[Translation]

**Ms. H  l  ne Laverdi  re:** I have another question for you.

You mentioned demobilization efforts. We know that this is a crucial aspect of ensuring the survival or the implementation of peace processes. We also know that such agreements remain fragile. What is the current demobilization situation? How can Canada help?

[English]

**Mr. Nuur Mohamud Sheekh:** Thank you very much again for that question.

The implementation of this process has just begun. What has been happening over the last few weeks and days is, number one, confidence building between leaders of these political parties. We've had two very important meetings so far of the National Pre-Transitional Committee and the National Constitutional Amendment Committee. The past two meetings were held in Khartoum, because we all viewed the confidence as not sufficient.

I am happy to now report that next week these two committees will meet in Juba, not outside of the country.

Number two, the ceasefire monitoring group CTSAMM has been visiting some of these areas that are under the former rebel groups and also other areas that are under the control of the government. The monitoring group is doing its work monitoring the ceasefire. The ceasefire, as I said earlier, is holding.

On demobilization, this is a conversation that is ongoing. It will start with cantonment of forces and then demobilization.

As my colleague Ms. Madenga also stated earlier, South Sudan's economy is in very bad shape. Oil has started flowing, but livelihood activities and employment opportunities are limited.

We encourage our international partners, such as Canada, to make sure that this trust between political leaders is sustained and pressure is put on them. It is only then that the situation on the ground will be safe for proper demobilization of these forces.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

MP Sidhu is next.

**Mr. Jati Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you both for your testimony.

My question will go to Ms. Madenga. You mentioned the word "ordinary" during your opening remarks quite a few times. What are the views of Canada in South Sudan with the ordinary people on the ground?

Did you get the question?

● (1615)

**Ms. Renifa Madenga:** No. I didn't get the question.

**Mr. Jati Sidhu:** You said "ordinary" a few times. I was wondering how they view Canada in their ordinary life in Sudan, or, to ask a two-tier question, how does the Sudanese government see the Canadian government working with it to combat the unrest, or the civil war, in South Sudan?

**Ms. Renifa Madenga:** Thank you very much.

During the several visits I did in South Sudan, the footprint of Canada was reflected in many of the Canadian agencies working in South Sudan in the form of the Canadian Lutheran World Relief, Save the Children Canada, Oxfam Canada, and Plan International. When we talked to ordinary people, there was a feeling of this support related to humanitarian assistance on the ground. When I say "ordinary people", I mean those who are directly affected by the conflict in South Sudan.

In terms of the interventions that Canada can take, Canada should continue to work with what I've referred to as the ordinary people. Let's say it's survivors of the conflict who are now living in PoCs or as IDPs, or when we talk of food insecurity, it's facilitating access to those people who don't have adequate food. It's also in terms of the medical facilities. The interventions I'm looking at from Canada are the humanitarian support that Canada is giving.

Then it's also in terms of issues like capacity building for accountability, so that even those local institutions can actually work directly with the people affected.

I know for a protracted crisis there is also donor fatigue. I would continue to encourage Canada to reach out to those people, because I think they are at a stage where they need a lot of help to rehabilitate, a lot of help to resettle, and a lot of help even to go through the process of recovering from the crisis.

**Mr. Jati Sidhu:** Are those demands coming through the bodies working on the ground directly with people or are they coming through the Government of Sudan?

**Ms. Renifa Madenga:** When I spoke to some of the people in the government, they didn't mention Canada. It was about what kind of support is needed on the ground. I was speaking to some of the government entities, some of the NGOs working on the ground, some of the people actually assisting people directly affected.



**Mr. Jati Sidhu:** Earlier this year, the UN had warned that there are going to be 1.2 million South Sudanese at risk of starvation as a result of ongoing conflict. What do you recommend for Canada? How do you see the Canadian government helping to combat that starvation on the ground?

**Ms. Renifa Madenga:** I think as a matter of priority Canada could use its diplomatic position to encourage the parties now on the ground to first of all cease all hostilities. I know there are certain groups that have not even signed the peace agreement. It is the responsibility and legal obligation of the Government of South Sudan to ensure that people are protected and also to ensure that they are provided for.

It would maybe be working hand in hand with the government to reach out, first of all, to people who are very desperate, to areas where food has not been accessible and other amenities have not been accessible, and also to work with the people who have indicated that they need more resources in terms of food security. There are areas where people need more food, where people are starving, where people would welcome accessibility and maybe mobile facilities that can bring provisions to them. I think that is an area of priority where Canada can work hand in hand with the local organizations that are already working there and some of the Canadian agencies that are on the ground.

It's continuing to access people who really need food relief, who are desperate, who are actually at a crisis or starving.

• (1620)

**Mr. Jati Sidhu:** I know it's a very young country. Do you see any light in the tunnel? Do you see that it can be self-sustainable for basic necessities somewhere along the line, even with international help?

**The Chair:** Ms. Madenga, I'm going to ask you for a very short response to that question because we're out of time. Since the question was asked, I want to give you a brief opportunity to answer.

**Ms. Renifa Madenga:** I will be very brief.

There is hope in South Sudan. The resilience of the people of South Sudan shows that given an opportunity of a democratic space and given sustainable peace, they can rebuild their country. I think there are problems in South Sudan, but the South Sudanese have solutions. They can rebuild.

I see a lot of hope in South Sudan. I believe that South Sudan will live in peace and the South Sudanese will rebuild their country. Canadians will be proud that they helped the South Sudanese to build South Sudan.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Sheekh, are you on the line?

**Mr. Nuur Mohamud Sheekh:** Yes, I am on the line. I also want to say with optimism that South Sudan is a very rich country. Its population is very small. It's 10 million people. It has vast oil resources. We understand that by the end of this year they will pump out 500 barrels of oil per day. We understand that they have massive gold resources. The land is very fertile.

Once we get the politics right in South Sudan, South Sudan will be in the position not only to feed itself but the entire IGAD region.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

I want to thank you both for joining us, Ms. Madenga from Washington and Mr. Sheekh. I know it's about 1:30 in the morning in Ethiopia at the moment, so thank you so much for staying up, and to both of you for your very valuable testimony as we move forward with this study.

Colleagues, with that, we'll suspend for a couple of minutes before starting the next panel. Thank you very much.

• (1620) \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

• (1625)

**The Chair:** We will continue with our second hour of panellists.

I'd like to welcome Kevin Dunbar and Gabrielle Tomovcik from CARE Canada.

Kevin is the director of global programs and impact, international operations and programs, and Gabrielle is the program manager, humanitarian assistance, international operations and programs.

From Save the Children Canada, we have Bill Chambers, the chief executive officer, and we also have Annie Bodmer-Roy.

Each group can give eight or nine minutes. Then we will immediately open it up to questions.

Let's start with CARE Canada, please. Go ahead, Mr. Dunbar.

**Mr. Kevin Dunbar (Director, Global Programs and Impact, International Operations and Programs, CARE Canada):** Thank you very much.

Thanks to this committee.

CARE Canada is honoured to contribute to this deliberation on South Sudan, Somalia and DRC. CARE is a rights-based international non-governmental organization. We support life-saving humanitarian assistance, protection, recovery and peacebuilding, as well as longer-term development work.

Last year, CARE reached more than 62 million people in 95 countries around the world, including South Sudan, Somalia and the DRC.

My remarks today are primarily focused on the crisis in South Sudan, its impact on women and girls, and recommendations that we can draw for Canada's role in the region.

These are both based on my personal experiences and inputs from CARE's brave South Sudanese staff, many of whom have worked at personal risk with people affected by conflict and drought for over 25 years.

I lived in South Sudan during the independence period. I had the privilege of sharing that with my South Sudanese colleagues. The atmosphere then was one of excitement and optimism. Today it's fair to say that optimism has vanished.

On my most recent visit to South Sudan, I met a mother at a clinic that CARE runs in Unity state. We talked about the services her children received, including high-energy food to help them recover from severe malnutrition. I also asked her about her hopes for the future. She said she hoped that she and her family survived, but she didn't expect peace. She expected things would get worse, with war, hunger and no services. So far, her predictions have held fairly true.

The South Sudanese displacement crisis is now the largest in Africa and the third-largest in the world. Since 2013, more than four million people have been forced to flee their homes, and it includes more than two million people who are now refugees in neighbouring countries. The majority of these displaced are women and children.

As your previous guests noted, parts of the country in South Sudan are reaching catastrophic levels of hunger that are rarely seen elsewhere in the world. Over seven million people, almost two-thirds of the population, require humanitarian assistance. Climate change and droughts are intensifying this food crisis, driving competition for these scarce resources and increasing the burden carried by vulnerable people.

This crisis has had a particularly devastating impact on women and girls. Women and girls in South Sudan make impossible decisions every day, decisions like whether to stay home in relative safety but hungry or to risk walking to distant markets or into the bush to gather firewood. Up to 65% of women and girls in South Sudan have experienced physical or sexual violence. That's 65%. Assault, abduction, rape and gang rape occur with impunity, even in broad daylight.

Some women resort to sexual exploitation for protection, food and survival. Early child forced marriages increase as parents face the impossible choice between accepting a dowry or falling deeper into debt, hunger and malnutrition. As a father myself, I can't imagine having to make that decision.

Recognizing that the global humanitarian funding is well below the needs, my recommendations today are focused on how Canada can most effectively use its resources to have the largest impact in these crises.

First, Canada needs to focus on the political solutions that address the root causes of these conflicts. The message I heard loud and clear from the South Sudanese people is that they need stability and peace. Paths to these solutions are becoming more complicated. Peace is often linked to military or security operations. Complex crises like those in South Sudan, DRC and Somalia do not have a singular cause or a singular solution.

The Canadian government should apply its whole-of-government approach to help find a negotiated political solution to the conflict. Critically, this solution needs to be accompanied by measures that address root causes, which include improving equality, building community resilience to shocks such as the impacts of climate change, and ensuring inclusive and effective governance at all levels in each country.

Effectively responding to these crises will clearly require a comprehensive regional approach. However this approach can't come at the expense of focusing on the critical needs and the root causes inside each country.

● (1630)

Second, we need a clear focus on women's and girls' specific needs and their agencies. Conflicts are a shock to the status quo, forcibly changing gender roles. This is both a challenge and an opportunity for change. Existing gender inequalities are compounded when humanitarian responses gloss over women's needs or simply portray women and girls as victims. Ensuring access to sexual and reproductive health services, for example, saves lives, just like clean water, shelter and food, but too often responses treat such services as an afterthought, more like an extra, so Canada should commit to the consistent and full provision of the minimum initial service package for reproductive health at the onset of every crisis and in every humanitarian response.

This ensures that emergency support considers women's reproductive needs right from the start. Women will still get pregnant and still give birth in crises.

With respect to women's agency, not nearly enough attention is given to women's and girls' contributions to social transformation even in the midst of conflict. Real change happens when programs are underpinned by meaningful consultation and engagement of women and girls.

Third, we need to fund and do more through local responders. Insecurity in active conflict often forces the suspension of activities, so we need to support programs that complement and reinforce national humanitarian actors, including local women's rights organizations. These local actors have better access and a better understanding of the local context. When provided with resources and supplementary support, they can do amazing work, yet only 2% of global funding currently goes directly to local organizations.

South Sudan is again this year the most dangerous country in the world to be an aid worker. National staff are often direct targets of violence against humanitarian organizations. Efforts to support local organizations should be matched with the appropriate resources to operate safely in these challenging environments. Additionally, Canada should continue to demand accountability for incidents when humanitarian workers are targeted, including publicly condemning such incidents when they occur.

Although a ceasefire has been reached, now is not our time to step back from efforts in South Sudan. To the contrary, I believe we need to double our efforts. Millions of people have been displaced, farmers have been unable to cultivate their crops, livelihoods and homes have been destroyed. A deep normalization of violence and impunity will leave a lasting impact on every generation, every community and every clan. This type of impact is not undone overnight. The number of people in need of assistance will remain shockingly high for years to come, but the people of South Sudan need some hope for the future, not just hope that their family will survive another day. They need hope that the international community will deliver on the promise they once gave to South Sudan.

Thank you for your interest in these forgotten crises today. I look forward to answering any of your questions. Thank you.

• (1635)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

Go ahead, Mr. Chambers.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Bill Chambers (Chief Executive Officer, Save the Children Canada):** Thank you for inviting us today and for having undertaken a study that is both appropriate and important.

[*English*]

Save the Children is a global INGO. We operate in 120 countries. We focus primarily on child rights protection, education, health and nutrition. We work domestically in Canada primarily with indigenous communities, youth and children, and internationally both as a humanitarian response and in sustainable development activities.

Based on our global experience, Save the Children is increasingly concerned for children in conflict, including in Somalia, DRC and South Sudan. Our research has indicated an increased number of children caught in conflict zones around the world, combined with an increase in the number of grave violations against children committed in these conflicts.

Using information from UN reports on grave violations, our researchers earlier this year identified the 10 most dangerous places to be a child, and the three countries you are studying all fall on the list.

We're focusing on South Sudan. Save the Children has been in South Sudan since 1989. We have a long history there. We're currently operating in seven of the former 10 states. Our work in food security response is integrated with health, nutrition, education and livelihoods as well as protection of the sector.

There is a certain amount of history that I'm sure you will have been studying. I won't go into that history, but the latest peace accord seems to be a positive step. The fact that it is supported and in fact sponsored by the presidents of Sudan and Uganda is a step that we think bodes well.

That said, reports as late as October from the World Food Programme confirm that there continues to be violence against humanitarian assistance delivery. Even if peace is sustained, as

Kevin said, it's a long road to recovery, and immediate intervention is needed to reintegrate children into families and communities.

Kevin also mentioned the number of people displaced: 900,000 children locally, and 12,000 children separated from their families. Those children have an increased vulnerability to violence and sexual exploitation, which is a particular concern for girls, who often have to turn to prostitution and are subject in a higher degree to child marriage.

An adolescent girl in South Sudan is more likely to die in childbirth than to finish primary school. That's a statistic that is hard to imagine in our context.

Our concerns for children in South Sudan focus on three major areas: protection from grave violations, children's education, and the severe food crisis, endangering the lives of an estimated 20,000 children just in the rest of this year.

Regarding grave violations, the UN Secretary General released a report that focused on South Sudan from 2014 to 2018. There are six kinds of grave violations, as you know.

In these six, 7,000 children were recruited for armed groups and forces; 1,850 children were either maimed or killed, with a strong tendency or frequency for boys being castrated before they're killed.

• (1640)

[*Translation*]

It is to discourage others.

[*English*]

Some 1,200 children have reported being subjected to sexual violence, and 75% of those cases were gang rapes. Gang rapes are not spontaneous; gang rapes are systematic and premeditated. Hospitals and schools have been targeted. Military use of schools has disrupted the education of 32,500 children.

We hope South Sudan's recent endorsement of the safe schools declaration can lead to a decrease in the military use of schools, but it has been pretty well rampant across the country in recent years.

During this period, 2,900 children were abducted, most of them boys, but there were 600 girls, many for purposes of sexual exploitation.

With regard to humanitarian access, as Kevin also pointed out, there were 1,500 verified incidents of delivery being denied, sometimes with violence against humanitarian workers. These grave violations are not random. This is systematic use of those kinds of actions to terrorize the population.

I'll say a quick word on education. Even before the conflict broke out in 2013, only one child in 10 in the country completed primary school. As a result of the conflict, 800 schools have been destroyed in South Sudan and 400,000 more children have been forced out of school. Today, South Sudan is estimated to have the world's highest proportion of children out of school, at 51%. That's particularly acute, of course, for girls. Seventy-three per cent of girls from six to 11 years old are not in school. By age 14, you're more likely to be married than to be in school in South Sudan.

I'll leave you with one statistic regarding the food crisis. Between now and the end of the year, 20,000 children are likely to die if appropriate response is not delivered. The delivery required is not only money and food but also humanitarian access. The revitalized peace agreement is a good sign for millions of children in South Sudan, but for those children to have a future, they need guaranteed access to humanitarian services, they need humanitarian assistance to be enhanced and sustained, and they need a lasting end to the conflict.

For all three countries you are studying, child protection needs to be prioritized. In the submission we've provided, there's a long list of specific proposals, but I have three requests to make today at a high level.

The first is prioritizing accountability for crimes committed against children, ensuring that future investigations of rights violations include child-specific and gender-specific expertise with child advisers and child protection officers. If there's impunity to these actions, they'll continue to be a growing problem across the world. It's growing not just in South Sudan but also in the two other countries you're studying. We need to bring people to account or it will grow.

The second is education. We welcome Canada's groundbreaking G7 commitment to girls' education in crisis, and in that context we urge the government to include education interventions for girls in South Sudan, in the DRC, and in Somalia.

The final proposal is to meet the urgent needs of the malnourished children of South Sudan and to ensure that humanitarian assistance reaches the 20,000 children who are likely to die over the course of the coming months if we don't.

Thank you for your time. I'd be happy to respond to questions.

•(1645)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Chambers and Mr. Dunbar. That's some sobering testimony.

Let's begin with MP Aboultaif, please.

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif:** Thank you for both presentations this afternoon.

We know how much South Sudan had to go through in the first war to separate from north Sudan and what that was all about. It seems that the problems are connected in a way. We have hunger, we have kids, we have IDPs, and we have a political situation. This is a foundational problem that those countries are going through. We have to deal with so many things. Probably as a priority, we have to deal with hunger before we deal with other things. We want to make sure that people survive, but then we have to add police protection, and then accountability comes up. It's the second or third time we've heard about accountability today.

The question is to both of you, and you choose who wants to answer first.

How can we set our priorities in Canada in order to be very effective, or most effective, in this situation? I think those directions are needed for us to begin or to continue down the road to make sure that we can find some fundamental solutions to the crisis.

One thing that comes to mind when I address that is how can we set the foundation to make sure that down the road, we'll find a long-term solution with the band-aid solutions that we have to deal with?

I leave that with you. Please go ahead.

**Mr. Bill Chambers:** I'd go back to the three recommendations I made.

The first, of course, is that if there are 20,000 children who are going to die in the next months, food security is the top priority from a humanitarian point of view.

I wouldn't want to think that we would sequentially deal with the three, though. If we leave another generation of girls in Sudan to languish, we're sowing the seeds of... I think, actually, that girls' education is part of the solution to the political, the social and the community processes. You have to keep them alive, but just keeping them alive in their current context is not enough.

Finally, globally, we need to have not just a reflex but a consistent approach to bringing to account those who commit crimes against children. These are heinous, disgusting crimes that we're talking about, and they're systematic. If we're not collectively outraged by that and if we don't ensure when we create mechanisms for monitoring that they include expertise in child investigation and gender investigation, then they'll just continue.

I don't think we can deal with them one at a time, but the first one is food to keep these children alive.

**Mr. Kevin Dunbar:** Thanks, Bill.

I think there's very little to add. I can talk a bit about it.

You're right. It is an incredibly complex situation, and I think we see parallels across all three countries and actually across all of the conflict in failing or failed states. We have underlying issues with inequality, with climate change and often with poor governance that results in root causes and in conflict. What we are seeing and what we're talking about are the impacts of that, right?

People are forced from their land, so then they need food, but because they've been forced from their land, they're not able to do basic agriculture work. They're not able to get set up for the next harvest season. At the same time, in South Sudan we had an economy that was in the tank. We had inflation rates of 161%. Even if you had money, you couldn't necessarily buy food. I heard testimony from people there that they held on to soap instead of cash, because their money just wasn't worth it. Holding on to soap was at least giving them some sort of asset that they might be able to sell down the line.

Ultimately, we need to tackle these root causes and to find a political solution to the conflict, but knowing that it's not going to happen in the immediate term, what we need to make sure of is the right services. I'm not going to argue on education or sexual reproductive health, because they're all needed in a place like South Sudan. What we really need to be focusing on are those local actors and on ensuring that we have the right funding and that it's going through to local national organizations, because they're going to be able to maintain it.

•(1650)

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif:** In this overall problem we're facing, you expect that the international community will say that we have to deal with hunger, with education and with protection of children and women—we have to deal with all of this. Do you see that the plan that is in place right now is going in the right direction and is really going to be effective moving forward? If Canada can take care of hunger and food security, other countries may take care of other things, and so on and so forth.

As an overall solution, or at least as an attempt to have a solution or to be moving in the right direction, are you convinced that the plan we have right now is a good plan?

**Mr. Kevin Dunbar:** I think it's moving in the right direction. I think we need to increase the progress in that right direction.

As I mentioned, we have 2% of the money going to local actors. That needs to be a lot higher, particularly in a place like South Sudan, where organizations like Save the Children and CARE don't always have access or have to pull back due to lack of security.

We need more money systematically, regardless of what we're funding. We need more money with local organizations. We also need to be ensuring that the money is reaching some of the areas that are hard to reach.

Again, there's this insecurity. South Sudan is a tough place. You have to take charter flights to get seven or eight hours into the middle of nowhere. In a context like that, where maybe the food distributions aren't always going to reach, we need to be working with communities to help build resilience in whatever that looks like in their particular community. We need to make sure that they're able to handle upcoming shocks and the issues that are coming to face them, whether it's climate change or conflict. I think we need to look at how we're delivering these services to make sure that we're being more effective with that. For me, that really looks at focusing on women and girls and also at local organizations.

**Mr. Bill Chambers:** It is perhaps a moment in time. All of the other peace agreements that have happened to date have had Sudan outside as a wild card, as a destabilizing factor. Now we have Sudan as a guarantor, and we have all of the major donors and world powers supporting it. It may be a moment when we can actually invest in more than one thing and get Sudan on a political basis, and on a communal basis, on a better track. It's worth a try.

We have to keep them alive, but just keeping them alive won't change the dynamic in Sudan. We need to change the local and political fabric of the place, which means we have to do some of the things that Kevin was just talking about.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

We will now go to Mr. Wrzesnewskij, please.

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskij (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.):** Thank you.

Let me begin by thanking both of your organizations, especially your front-line workers, the Canadians and others who are putting their own lives at risk to save the lives of others. They're really Canadian heroes, so I give a heartfelt thank you for that.

We've heard how all the parties engaged in the civil war were engaged in using rape as a weapon. We've heard that it's not just widespread and that in fact it's rampant. Two-thirds of women and girls have experienced it. It seems to be a defining feature of the civil war in Sudan. There is a culture of sexual violence coupled with a culture of impunity.

Mr. Chambers, you gave three points—and very specific points—and I'd like to perhaps come back to some of that.

Mr. Dunbar, you generally said that real change happens when women and girls are engaged in a process. You have on-the-ground experience. You talked about the women you met over a period of time. How do you envision it on a micro level and on a macro level? There's a peace process. How do you envision that women ought to be engaged in the peace processes? How do you envision them engaged down to the village level?

**Mr. Kevin Dunbar:** I think that's an excellent question, and I'm going to answer it kind of from a gender lens, which for CARE is focused on women and girls, but we also need to engage men and boys in the process.

I think in the peace process... When I was last there, I actually met with a number of women's rights organizations that were trying to come behind a common banner to really influence the peace process, both at a community level and at the national level. I think we need to reinforce and continue that support.

While this was kind of an umbrella group of women's rights organizations, they were poorly funded, challenged in terms of organization, and divided along clan and conflict lines. There was a real willingness and energy there, but I think the international community, organizations like CARE, and governments need to be putting their momentum and support behind women's groups. That means directly funding women's rights organizations and helping to ensure that their voices are heard all the way from the community level up.

Part of that process really needs to be engaging men and boys as agents of change. If we are going to deal with that, we need to be working with them to help change some of those gender norms.

•(1655)

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskij:** Do you have a model that you could give as an example?

**Mr. Kevin Dunbar:** Yes, we have a number of models. The one that we focus on, particularly with regard to humanitarian assistance, is for women to lead in emergencies.

When we look at emergency response around the world, we see it's traditionally planned by the people who are locally in power. In a place like South Sudan, those traditional leaders are primarily men, so our focus is on trying to get conflict-affected women involved in the planning and delivery of humanitarian assistance. We believe that if you're involved from the start in the planning, in playing a leadership role in that food distribution, in the delivery of sex and reproductive health services, those services are going to better meet the needs of women and girls.

At the same time, we're investing in local women leaders, which is then going to put them in a different position, one where they are able to influence local traditional powers. We're doing that in a number of countries: South Sudan, Bangladesh, DRC. That's our goal there.

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskij:** Thank you.

Mr. Chambers, I'd like to come back to one of your points and this culture of impunity.

You talked about accountability. Obviously, using sexual violence as a tool of war is widespread. I understand that scores of humanitarian workers have been killed and that many themselves were victims of this sort of sexual violence.

How do you envision the accountability? Have any processes begun to bring people to account?

**Mr. Bill Chambers:** One of the key things is to ensure that in the budgets of the United Nations monitoring mechanisms there is enough funding for child- and gender-related expertise, and that this funding, particularly in places like South Sudan, leads to proper investigations with proper compiling of evidence and data so that prosecution can be pursued.

Without that, you're basically hooped, unless you have people investigating. As Kevin says, the voice of the child and the woman is extremely important, so you need to have people trained to deal with how to speak to the children so that we don't further traumatize children. That requires special training. That requires funding, and people to be dispatched to the field to do that. You need child protection officers and child protection advisers, and you need the budget to support them.

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskij:** Have any of these types of investigations begun in the cases of those who came as protectors—the humanitarian workers who've been victims of this sort of violence?

**Mr. Bill Chambers:** The UN is really the institution charged with the monitoring of that kind of crime. Humanitarian workers report, but in order to compile and to create investigative evidence that will stand up, you need formal systems. The UN Secretary General did conduct a large study, and we hope that it will be followed up with the appointment of sufficient people on the ground to gather evidence to pursue prosecution.

• (1700)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

We're now going to move to Madame Laverdière.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Hélène Laverdière:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I would like to thank both witnesses for their presentations today and all the work they do over there and elsewhere.

Mr. Chambers, I would like to come back to one of your comments. You said we had to change

[*English*]

the political and local fabric.

[*Translation*]

That could be done if women were given more power to participate in humanitarian aid. That is a good example. It also has to do with empowerment, which is a very important aspect.

To that end, you mentioned a crucial word: funding. Is our current funding level sufficient? Is this an area in which Canada could do more?

**Mr. Bill Chambers:** Overall, the funding levels are not sufficient. There is not enough expertise, not enough experts on the ground. That is true around the world, not only in South Sudan.

In fact, Canada could pressure the United Nations to increase that expertise.

**Ms. Hélène Laverdière:** I will finish with a question that has to do with children more specifically.

We know that a certain member of child soldiers were recruited. Does the peace agreement contain specific provisions about those child soldiers?

**Mr. Bill Chambers:** The agreement contains provisions on demobilizing the army's child soldiers, but to my knowledge, there are no specific provisions about their transition to a life of peace.

Mrs. Bodmer-Roy, do you have that information?

**Mrs. Annie Bodmer-Roy (Head of Policy, Advocacy and Campaigns, Save the Children Canada):** We can check.

**Mr. Bill Chambers:** To my knowledge, I don't believe there are any.

**Ms. Hélène Laverdière:** Okay.

This is an issue that concerns us all, especially as Canadians, given all the work that has been done in that area.

You both mentioned the problem of access to humanitarian assistance, a problem that is often denied. How could Canada better help to overcome this problem, or even simply resolve it?

**Mr. Bill Chambers:** First of all, the agreement, as such, would have to apply to the whole country. I am sure you are aware that several military groups are moving around the country, groups from various political or ethnic backgrounds. The agreement was negotiated between the main parties, but the whole country would have to be subject to the same standards if there is to be any hope of putting a stop to the violence completely.

The agreement stipulates a

[*English*]

submission of all of those smaller groups.

[*Translation*]

It provides for a return to normal civilian life and an end to the war. We shall see how things unfold.

**Mr. Kevin Dunbar:** I apologize, my French is not very good.

[*English*]

**Ms. Hélène Laverdière:** Go ahead.

**Mr. Kevin Dunbar:** I think that ultimately it refers to the need for hostilities and active conflict to come to an end. I think that's one of the biggest challenges for humanitarian access. Humanitarian access, an end to attacks on aid workers and humanitarian workers and the culture of accountability need to change, and I think that needs to be a measure of the success of the peace process.

I think that's an area where our Canadian diplomatic efforts can say that we want to see access improving, we want to see reports on access improving and we want some accountability for those attacks. That's a measure of our engagement in the belief that the peace process is improving.

I know that Canadian diplomats in South Sudan have been really engaged with humanitarian organizations for a long time, and they have played a really active role in trying to negotiate both with the government and with different parties of the conflict to ensure access and try to unblock some of those issues, and I would encourage Canada's diplomatic mission to continue that. At my last meeting there, it was really clear that it was a continued focus, but that is an area where Canada can really play a leadership role.

• (1705)

**Ms. Hélène Laverdière:** Canada covers South Sudan from which mission? We don't have a direct mission.

**Mr. Kevin Dunbar:** There is one in Juba, yes.

**Ms. Hélène Laverdière:** Okay. Sorry for my ignorance.

**Mr. Kevin Dunbar:** It has an ambassador now. There wasn't one when I was first there, but now we have an ambassador.

**Ms. Hélène Laverdière:** Okay. It was a chargé d'affaires, probably.

**Mr. Kevin Dunbar:** Exactly. They live in a little bunker, but it's nice.

**Ms. Hélène Laverdière:** Well, I can figure that. Are they without family?

**Mr. Kevin Dunbar:** They're without family, yes.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We will now move to MP Baylis, please.

**Mr. Frank Baylis (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.):** Thank you, Chair.

It's very sobering testimony, but it's probably necessary to set it in place.

This peace accord was signed in August, I believe.

**Mr. Bill Chambers:** It was September.

**Mr. Frank Baylis:** It was September, and it wouldn't be the first or second time if it were to fail, correct?

Do you have a specific belief this is more likely to stick? You prioritized one, two, three things, and I think they're excellent, but is there not work that we should be doing to make this hold, quite frankly, even while people starve? If you lose peace, you're back to square one. Are you feeling very confident that this is a different deal?

**Mr. Bill Chambers:** Am I very confident? No. The specific difference between this deal and other deals is the sponsorship of the

President of Sudan and the President of Uganda for the deal. In the past, the political wild card in any peace deal was the active role of Sudan, the competition over oil, the tense relations between Sudan and South Sudan, and the ability of sometimes small, sometimes mid-sized, military groups to go and seek support from Sudan.

**Mr. Frank Baylis:** So Sudan might have been purposely undermining any peace for their own personal interests?

**Mr. Bill Chambers:** Yes.

**Mr. Kevin Dunbar:** Yes.

**Mr. Frank Baylis:** One thing, for example, Canada could do is that if we have relations with Sudan, we could start leaning on them to make sure they don't start sliding.

**Mr. Bill Chambers:** Absolutely.

**Mr. Frank Baylis:** If our first goal is to make this agreement hold, before you get into your three priorities, what actions should we be taking to make this thing hold?

**Mr. Bill Chambers:** Should we make it stick? Yes.

**Mr. Frank Baylis:** But what should we doing with this thing? Who should we be leaning on? What should we be doing?

**Mr. Bill Chambers:** We're a big contributor of aid in the whole region. We should be putting pressure on the whole region. Sudan, like everyone else, has relations with all of its neighbours. They're a big recipient of aid. We all need to make sure that they know where their interests lie and that their interests lie in a peaceful South Sudan.

**Mr. Frank Baylis:** For example, our government could make it very clear that if we see them being disruptive, they personally will pay the price.

**Mr. Bill Chambers:** Yes. I mean, "personally"...I'm not sure that

**Mr. Frank Baylis:** They will pay the price with our aid.

**Mr. Bill Chambers:** Yes, with our aid. We should use whatever diplomatic means we think will be effective to ensure that Sudan plays a peacebuilding role in the region as a whole. The region is—

**Mr. Frank Baylis:** I understand that.

What about Uganda? Are they problematic, or are they not a problem?

**Mr. Bill Chambers:** They're not. In terms of their treatment of refugees, they've actually been among the most progressive and enlightened. They've just introduced—

**Mr. Frank Baylis:** So the real problem is Sudan in terms of being a disrupter—

**Mr. Bill Chambers:** It has been.

**Mr. Frank Baylis:** It has been, but we hope in the last two months maybe not.

**Mr. Bill Chambers:** Yes.

**Mr. Frank Baylis:** They say they're going to behave, but...

**Mr. Bill Chambers:** In the rest of the region, Somalia is also not a stable area. There's lots of instability in the region. Uganda is generally a source of progressive views, but in the recent history, which we can dive into if you want and if we have more time, Sudan has been the principal actor stirring—

**Mr. Frank Baylis:** It's been disrupting things, and you talked about the need for security and stability as the number one factor. Every time they don't like something, they start being...

Are there other things we should be doing, first of all, just to bring security and stability?

**Mr. Kevin Dunbar:** I think it would be putting pressure on Sudan. I would caution using aid as a political bargaining chip. I think aid needs to be there to respond to the needs. I think a lot of trade and diplomatic pressure can really be put on a country like Sudan.

• (1710)

**Mr. Frank Baylis:** What specifically can be done?

**Mr. Kevin Dunbar:** I think they want access to the Canadian markets, regional markets. This is why I mentioned that it needs to be a regional response. I think that's what Canada's role can be. These are interconnected economies. All the oil is in the south.

**Mr. Frank Baylis:** Yes, but let's be specific. If we want to put pressure on Sudan, aid is touchy because you end up hurting the people you want to help.

**Mr. Kevin Dunbar:** Yes.

**Mr. Frank Baylis:** What else should we be doing, specifically?

**Mr. Kevin Dunbar:** My sense is around diplomatic pressure, particularly pressure on trade, and also looking at their oil.

**Mr. Frank Baylis:** They have a business community that could be hurt, and it supports the government. Is that what you're saying?

**Mr. Kevin Dunbar:** That's my sense. A lot of these countries, as they begin to stabilize, become a very attractive place for Canadian business. From a Canadian angle, if they're not stable—an insecure South Sudan does have an impact on north Sudan, but not as much—it isn't good for business in these countries.

That goes for Somalia as well. I met a lot of businessmen when I was in Somalia who wanted nothing more than stability so they could start to run their businesses.

**Mr. Frank Baylis:** These are Somali business people.

**Mr. Kevin Dunbar:** Yes, Somali, but I think the same thing holds in north Sudan as well.

**Mr. Frank Baylis:** They're supporting the Sudanese government.

**Mr. Kevin Dunbar:** Well, some are supportive of the Sudanese government. Some may not be. Sudan itself is a pretty disparate and fairly clan-based area as well. There's lots of conflict even within Sudan.

**Mr. Frank Baylis:** In terms of working to achieve and maintain stability, you've put out three points. We need to go after these bad people and punish them. We need to work on education, specifically focusing on women. Then you said that malnutrition—

**Mr. Bill Chambers:** Food security.

**Mr. Frank Baylis:**—food security is coming. You're saying that these three things need to be looked at simultaneously.

**Mr. Bill Chambers:** Those are my priorities.

**Mr. Frank Baylis:** Mr. Dunbar, would you have something to add to that?

**Mr. Kevin Dunbar:** For me it would be very, very similar. Look at some of the needs around women and sexual reproductive health. The point was mentioned that women are more likely to die in childbirth than they are to finish school. I think if we don't deal with some of those issues and some of the violence against women, then they won't be able to access education. I think we need to be dealing with that at the same time.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

We have to finish a little early today, so we'll go to a shorter round of questions.

We'll go to MP Saini and then to MP Aboutaif.

**Mr. Raj Saini:** Thank you very much for being here. I have two questions and only four minutes, so I hope you'll work with me.

First, you keep mentioning Uganda and Sudan. With Sudan, we know that the president right now has been charged with war crimes. Uganda, we know, has told President Kiir that if there are any UN sanctions against arms, an arms embargo, he would skirt those. How will those two countries provide any kind of stability to South Sudan?

**Mr. Bill Chambers:** The armed groups in Sudan need outside help. The two powerful neighbours who can exert immediate pressure are Sudan and Uganda. Having those as a guarantor, and not undermining, is bound to help.

Are all of the actors in the neighbourhood good actors? No. You're dealing with who's actually in control and who can exert pressure. Behind this accord, there's the U.S. and there's the U.K. and a whole bunch of global powers who think this is a way to ensure a level of security in the country. It's not a place where you can choose your partners. You have to choose who's there.

**Mr. Raj Saini:** This question is for Mr. Dunbar. You mentioned something very important when you talked about the economy in South Sudan. Right now, we know that 98% of the economy in South Sudan is based on the oil economy and, of that 98%, 40% is owned by the Chinese national oil company.

What other economy can be formulated there, when 98% of the economy is already oil export and 40% of that is controlled by the Chinese?

When you talk about investment in South Sudan, what investments are you talking about, when China has such a large play in their economy there?

**Mr. Kevin Dunbar:** That's an excellent question.



One of the things that needs a lot of focus is agriculture. South Sudan is one of the most fertile countries in the region. There is tremendous potential for agriculture, both in South Sudan to feed South Sudan, but also as trade and an ability to feed other parts of the region. There is a tremendous untapped potential there, and it is being impacted by conflict, insecurity, lack of access to education and lack of ability to stay on your land. If you're getting displaced from your land every six months, then you're not going to actually be able to build that agriculture.

You also have tremendous tourism opportunities. The Nile goes through South Sudan. Some of the largest herds of wildebeest in the world go through South Sudan as well. I managed to see a little bit of it while I was there, so there are tourism opportunities as well, but agriculture's a key.

• (1715)

**Mr. Raj Saini:** When you talk about agriculture, you're also talking about issues from the impacts of climate change. You talk about tourism and you were discussing the Blue Nile, but that area is not very secure either. I mean, with 40% of the economy controlled by the Chinese and the fact that the area is not safe, what economic investment could we make as a country to help the South Sudanese?

**Mr. Kevin Dunbar:** Tourism is a long shot, so I threw that out there, but I really think that agriculture is key. There are parts of the country that are slightly less impacted by climate change. There are areas where you can still grow food. There are some extremely arable areas of the country. I think we need to focus on those areas in Equatoria that can feed the rest of the country.

**Mr. Raj Saini:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

Go ahead, MP Aboultaif.

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif:** I will stay on this topic because I know enough about South Sudan. It's a very rich and fertile land. Agriculture can be on some of the best land in the world, where you can work more than two seasons throughout the year and get maybe three harvests, and then you still get the best of the best. In the meantime, the business community and construction and projects are still going in the country. What's happened is that the war is over the regional interests of the neighbours, as well as the outside scope of the regional powers.

On that topic and on that base, I go back to sanctions. Sanctions have worked. The only way is to really continue to provide...because the economy is producing. We have to be realistic about this whole thing. We can't just ignore it and think that everything's falling apart, so there's nothing over there and nobody is producing anything. No,

business communities and China are making money, as well as the neighbours and other interest groups that come in. Everybody's doing those deals. Only the average people are suffering, such as the children, girls, women and the most vulnerable.

I go back to the question of sanctions for Mr. Dunbar and Mr. Chambers. Do you believe that more sanctions are very important in order to be able to enforce the way through?

**Mr. Kevin Dunbar:** I personally can't speak to the effect of sanctions in the country, positive or not. It's not something that I have done a tremendous amount of analysis on, but I do think anything that pressures and forces better governance is good.

There is money. There's certainly money. It's certainly not being redistributed at all or being invested in the infrastructure that the average person needs, so I think anything that can push and encourage and hold governments to be more inclusive is critical along with dealing with the inflation and issues with the economy. There was 800% inflation in 2016. If you're wealthy, you're going to be okay, but if you're not, you're in real trouble.

**Mr. Bill Chambers:** Sanctions are something that you might consider at some point, but a month after a deal is struck seems to me to be the wrong time. It seems to me that you have to try to make the deal work. If it works and you achieve a level of stability, then the question is how you keep it going.

If it doesn't and it returns to old behaviour, then maybe sanctions might be useful, but it would seem to me to be the wrong time for them at the moment.

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif:** Sanctions have to continue to be there. I think sanctions have got us the deal that we're dealing with right now, since September 12. I hope it's going to continue to work.

However, if we don't keep doing that, there's nothing you can do other than.... There are two ways, by either sanctions or by force. I don't think force is an option. You have to at least use the tools that you have at hand.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

With that, I will thank you all for coming in and giving us some riveting testimony. It was difficult to hear, but important for us to hear nonetheless.

Colleagues, we are going to say goodbye to our guests, and then we're going to go immediately in camera for a couple of minutes.

I will suspend.

*[Proceedings continue in camera]*





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