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South Sudan

Get rid of leaders to stop war in South Sudan

- IV Online magazine - 2025 - IVP609 - October 2025 -

Publication date: Friday 17 October 2025

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Through their corruption and ethnicist politics, the country's elites are plunging South Sudan into a new abyss of violence. Since its separation from Sudan in July 2011, the country has only experienced civil wars, of varying intensity. For the past eight months, Riek Machar, the vice-president, has been appearing in court on several charges such as crimes against humanity, rebellion and treason.

A permanent war

He is accused of inciting the “white” Army, a militia reputed to be close to his organization, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in Opposition (SPLM-IO), to attack the barracks of Nasir, a city in Upper Nile State, causing the death of more than 250 soldiers. Reprisal operations launched by South Sudanese President Salva Kiir have targeted civilians and caused tens of thousands of people to flee. The 2018 peace accords, which were supposed to end the civil war, were never really implemented. Clashes continued on both sides.

The trial against Riek Machar and several leaders of the SPLM-IO is considered a breach of this peace agreement, especially since it has been accompanied by violent aerial bombardments against the cantonment centres of the organisation's troops, which were to be integrated. These fighters have dispersed across the country and now have no choice but to resume guerrilla warfare. This situation is worrying, because an alliance has been created between the SPLM-IO and another militia, Thomas Cirilo's National Salvation Front (NSF), which risks tipping the country back into a full-blown civil war.

Ethnicism and corruption

For Salva Kiir, the goal is to get rid of the opposition. He managed to poach some leaders of the SPLM-IO to maintain the façade of a government of national unity. His concern is to ensure his succession and hand over power to Benjamin Bol Mel, a businessman crony from Kiir's family clan, who has already been appointed vice-president. Such a policy only traps the country in a conflictual situation.

Since its creation, the elites at the head of the young state have not ceased to exploit ethnic divisions by using the community to which they belong: Riek Machar for the Nuer, Thomas Cirilo for the Bari and Salva Kiir for the Dinka. At the same time, the economic situation is disastrous. South Sudan's oil exports are blocked because of the war in Sudan and above all the country's funds are embezzled on a large scale.

This is according to a report by the UN Commission on Human Rights, which departs from its diplomatic language to denounce a “shameless predation”. The report declares the above-mentioned Mel to be guilty of embezzling two billion dollars intended for road infrastructure. Another example: the Ministry of Health received only 19% of its budget, or \$29 million, while the budget for presidential affairs exceeded its allocation by 584%, or \$557 million.

The only solution for peace is for the people, all communities combined, to get rid of these warmongers.

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Translated by **International Viewpoint** from [l'Anticapitaliste](#).

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