



# The People's Coalition for Civil Action

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## IGAD Is Failing South Sudan and the Region

The People's Coalition for Civil Action (PCCA) read with deep disgust, both **the Report** of the Executive Secretary of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to the 43rd Extraordinary Summit of IGAD Heads of State and Government on the Situation in the Republic of South Sudan and **the Communiqué** of the 43rd Extraordinary Summit of IGAD Heads of State and Government on the Situation in the Republic of South Sudan, dated March 12, 2025 (Virtual Summit).

The PCCA is particularly disturbed by the following statements—The communiqué claims to have “reaffirmed the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) of 2018 as the cornerstone of the peace process in South Sudan” and the report of IGAD Executive Secretary further asserts that “The implementation of the 2018 Revitalized Peace Agreement, though imperfect, has succeeded in reducing large-scale conflict for significant periods, allowing the country and communities to make long-term investments in development.” Both statements are not only false but also deeply damaging to the pursuit of genuine peace and stability in South Sudan. Here's why.

Is the R-ARCSS truly the cornerstone of peace in South Sudan? Says who? We need not look further than IGAD's own Revitalized Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (RJMEC) reports, which consistently document the parties' failure to implement the agreement. We need not look further than President Kiir's repeated violations of the R-ARCSS, including his unilateral dismissal of officials from other parties. We need not look further than the persistent defections of military officers, who continue to switch allegiances despite supposedly operating under a unified command and the fact that we continue to have more than one separate armies in the country. We need not look further than the complete absence of peace in South Sudan evidenced by lack of return of refugees and internally displaced persons.

The ordinary people of South Sudan are convinced beyond any doubt that the R-ARCSS is nothing more than a death trap for them and their families. If no one in IGAD would work under these conditions, what is the justification of prescribing it as the cornerstone for peace in our country? The recent violence in Nasir is symptomatic of growing frustrations with the R-ARCSS though no more severe than the numerous violations recorded in Unity, Western Equatoria, Western Bahr el Ghazal, Warrap, Jonglei, Eastern Equatoria states among others. The only difference this time? The fighting has affected the political elites in Juba and foreign UN staff—which is why IGAD is suddenly paying attention.

Second, what evidence supports the claims that “The implementation of the 2018 Revitalized Peace Agreement, though imperfect, has succeeded in reducing large-scale conflict for significant periods, allowing the country and communities to make long-term investments in development”? The R-ARCSS has neither resolved the conflict nor achieved peace in South Sudan. It has completely failed the people, brought the country’s economy to its knees, and failed to create the necessary conditions for successful political transition. The letter and intent of the R-ARCSS are great, the reality of its implementation is not even close to what was envisioned.

To insist that the R-ARCSS is a corner stone of peace in South Sudan is to insult the intelligence of the people who have severely suffered the consequences of its glaring failure. We cannot speak of the R-ARCSS’s envisioned long-term political objectives—peace, a new constitution, and elections—because they remain far out of reach. The creation of a unified national army is nowhere near realization, and armed rebellions have only proliferated during the so-called implementation of the agreement. The people of South Sudan remain bitterly divided, while the government is utterly ineffective and largely absent across the country. The state itself is hollow and powerless. Prompting deployment of troops from a neighboring country to protect the government and the government forces. Corruption is no longer even a relevant term in South Sudan—we have moved beyond such low-level characterizations. Public funds are openly siphoned into private individual bank accounts, despite the so-called public financial management measures under the R-ARCSS.

The so-called collegial presidency remains merely a concept; in reality, South Sudan—under the R-ARCSS and the watchful eyes of IGAD—has transitioned from an authoritarian state to an outright autocracy. Trust in government institutions and political leadership has been eroded to the bone so much that a meeting of the Presidency had to take a serious plea from First Vice President in an open letter copied to several heads of states and nearly all diplomatic missions in Juba. Meanwhile, IGAD has failed to hold the parties accountable to the agreement’s terms and timelines, allowing the R-ARCSS to be instrumentalized to entrench kleptocracy and autocracy. Some IGAD officials have even been inducted into South Sudan’s **hall of disgrace**, serving the interests of the autocrats in Juba. One must wonder—what indicators IGAD is using for its assessments?

Given these challenges, what exactly was resolved at the 43rd Extraordinary Summit of IGAD Heads of State and Government on the Situation in South Sudan? The Summit decided to “constitute an IGAD Ministerial-level sub-committee on South Sudan to effectively engage and monitor the restoration of calm, as well as oversee the implementation of key tasks under the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS), including the unification of forces, drafting of the constitution, and preparations for elections.” However, a closer look at this resolution reveals its failure to address the severity of the crisis. Instead, it exposes IGAD’s apparent lack of understanding—or worse, its indifference to the suffering of the South Sudanese people.

The mandate of the Ministerial Sub-Committee on South Sudan is vague at best. “To effectively engage and monitor the restoration of calm?” That’s it? How can calm be restored without first identifying and addressing the root causes of the instability? Even if calm were somehow reestablished, what comes next? The resolution provides no roadmap for sustainable peace, only a vague commitment to further engagement. South Sudan is full of regional bodies like the IGAD’s

Special Envoy to South Sudan, African Union Mission in South Sudan, and the African Union C-5. What is it that they cannot do that requires an ad-hoc Ministerial Sub-Committee on South Sudan? How many of such committees will be deployed to South Sudan before IGAD accepts that the R-ARCSS is resting in its coffin?

The communiqué states that the sub-committee will engage “on the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) with regard to the implementation timeline and essential tasks, including the necessary unification of forces, drafting of the constitution, and preparations for elections.” But where does IGAD find the confidence to believe that the parties will implement an agreement they have blatantly ignored for the past seven years? Does this not indicate that the IGAD Summit is failing to treat the crisis with the urgency and seriousness it demands? Moreover, what does “engagement” actually entail? If the past seven years of R-ARCSS implementation are any indication, it amounts to little more than urging the parties to stall while pretending to make progress. The people of South Sudan are exhausted by these empty shows and promises—they need concrete solutions and decisive action. This resolution is not just devoid of substance; it is worse than mere lip service—it is a calculated distraction from the ongoing crisis.

This analysis of the 43rd Extraordinary Summit of IGAD Heads of State and Government on the Situation in South Sudan is not an attack on IGAD but rather a wake-up call for regional leaders to accurately assess the situation in South Sudan. The recent turmoil has little to do with the R-ARCSS and implementing it will not resolve the underlying crisis. Instead, the unrest is rooted in succession politics, fueled by widespread rumors—partially confirmed—that President Kiir is preparing to voluntarily leave office and hand over power to Dr. Benjamin Bol Mel. These speculations gained credibility when President Kiir appointed Dr. Mel as Vice President, a move widely interpreted as positioning him as the 1st Deputy Chairman of the ruling Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM)—effectively making him the heir to the presidency. The President’s recent decisions within the party, government, military, and security apparatus suggest a deliberate effort to clear obstacles from Dr. Mel’s path to power.

Given these facts, why is IGAD avoiding dealing with this matter for what it is? Why should this be framed in the context of the R-ARCSS? This is why the PCCA believes IGAD is failing the people of South Sudan—it is fixated on a narrative that has little to do with the real challenges the country is facing. South Sudan and the R-ARCSS are not synonymous, and IGAD risks overlooking crucial threats to South Sudan’s viability and regional peace and security if it continues to view the situation through outdated lenses. Both the R-ARCSS and the Tumaini Initiative have been overtaken by recent developments and are now obsolete in addressing the country’s emergent political situation. Framing anything within the R-ARCSS framework will only lead to failure and disappointment, wasting valuable time that should be focused on addressing the current realities.

The R-ARCSS has been completely subverted, manipulated, and repurposed to serve the narrow political interests of President Kiir. Insisting on its implementation means forcing the people of South Sudan into subjugation. Similarly, the Tumaini Initiative has been irreparably derailed by a collusion between President Kiir and elements in IGAD, leaving those involved with no remaining trust in the process. To be clear, while President Ruto still enjoys trust from the parties, the RTGoNU and IGAD can no longer be trusted in this matter.

As far as the people of South Sudan are concerned, their voice has been made clear through the National Dialogue: they want both President Kiir and Dr. Riek Machar to step out of politics and allow the country to pursue an inclusive national political roundtable dialogue that will lead to a constitutional agreement and elections. Anything less than this will inevitably lead to a chaotic revolution, which could either save or dismember the country. If IGAD seeks a meaningful role, it should assist South Sudan in dismantling the privatized militias and forming a national army. Simultaneously, an all-inclusive national political roundtable should be organized to achieve a constitutional agreement and set a timeline for elections. Prolonging failed political transitions only risks pushing the country toward disintegration and could throw the entire region into crisis. Alternatively, if President Kiir is genuinely committed to stepping down for Dr. Benjamin Bol Mel to take power, he should announce a clear timeline for his departure and allow the political roundtable to proceed toward a constitutional agreement and election timelines.

**...The People shall Prevail...**

*The People's Coalition for Civil Action (PCCA) is a prodemocracy civil rights movement committed to mobilize and organize the people of South Sudan to unite in building a peaceful, just, free, and prosperous democratic society through nonviolent actions. The PCCA may be reached on email through: [thecivilactionssd@gmail.com](mailto:thecivilactionssd@gmail.com).*