



Maximum Pressure Campaign and Diplomatic Surge Needed Now in South Sudan

November 2019

The latest postponement in South Sudan of the formation of a government of national unity for another 100 days, along with the lack of implementation of key aspects of the peace accord, demonstrates the inadequacy of current efforts to promote peace in the country. Ad hoc emergency diplomacy and vague threats of future consequences will not bring about the full implementation of the peace agreement. Given the monumental failures by the leaders of the South Sudanese government and the opposition, the time has come for a maximum pressure campaign, one that is tied to explicit benchmarks and that will unleash serious consequences for those leaders on both sides who obstruct and do not implement the agreement.

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the broader international community should work with the government of South Sudan and the opposition to establish clear benchmarks focused on implementing the provisions of the deal—provisions that must be met before the formation of the unity government on February 12, 2020.

To enforce these benchmarks, the international community, led by the United States, should create a three-month intensive campaign to hold political leaders from both sides accountable and to impose serious consequences on spoilers who do not adhere to the benchmarks required to move the peace agreement forward. The international community should not wait until the deadline to begin taking action. They should track progress and act decisively and strategically to avert missed deadlines, and not simply respond to problems after the fact.

Specifically, governments interested in supporting peace should collaborate in freezing spoilers and their commercial networks out of the global financial system. To enhance impact, network sanctions should be imposed, going beyond the individual peace spoilers to include their companies and commercial partners, both local and international. These, combined with anti-money laundering measures and visa sanctions, will disrupt the intentions of the peace spoilers and send a strong message that there is a price to pay for impunity. Enlisting the support of banks and governments in the region and beyond will be critical both in exerting maximum pressure on South Sudan's leaders and in achieving peace.



Maximum pressure absent an enhanced diplomatic strategy tied to the use of these financial tools will surely fail to meet the objective of a lasting peace. IGAD and the Troika therefore need to undertake sustained, intensive diplomacy over these next three months and beyond to help the parties find compromises on critical security and governance challenges.

If there are no clear benchmarks for progress established, and no serious consequences for senior officials on both sides who are complicit in obstructing progress, then the likelihood of an eventual return to war will increase exponentially.

