

The Peacekeeping Failure in South Sudan: The UN, Bias, and Peacekeeper's Mind

by Mark Millar

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South Sudan is in the heart of Africa's turbulent landscape, plagued by decades of conflict and instability. In "The Peacekeeping Failure in South Sudan: The UN, Bias, and Peacekeeper's Mind," author Mark Millar allows the readers to embark with him on a journey that unveils the intricacies of maintaining peace in one of the most challenging settings in the world. Millar examines the complexities of the UN's attempts to promote peace in South Sudan, shedding light on the reasons for their failure via painstaking investigation and perceptive analysis. This book provides a thorough analysis of the difficulties and shortfalls that have influenced peacekeeping efforts in the South Sudanese context, ranging from examining the psychological prejudices of peacekeepers to closely scrutinizing the structural constraints of the enactment of UN peacekeeping. Millar's work is a timely and thought-provoking contribution to the literature on peacekeeping and international intervention as the international community grapples with the several strands that entangle and exasperate the conflict. Through its rigorous analysis and thought-provoking content, 'The Peacekeeping Failure in South Sudan' invites readers to reassess their assumptions and perspectives on peacekeeping practices, offering valuable insights into the nature of such operations.

The author relates the impact of the biases within the UN, how bounded rationality infiltrates the halls of the organization, and later translates on the tactical level of peacekeeping operations, as the title suggests. He suggests that such biases, constraints due to bounded rationality that later reflects in organizational behaviour, undermine optimal decision-making. A significant reference in the book is the satirical mention of Richard Gervais's show 'The Office' and the way it complements the functional bureaucracy of the UN, typically in how people in the office are overcome by petty issues such as 'who gets the bigger chair' instead of focusing on the grave nature of the task at hand. Thus, in its essence, the book provides a thorough analysis of UN peacekeeping efforts in South Sudan, unveiling the causes of their failure. The personal recounts given by the author, while aptly relating the internalized practices of the UN to possible international relations theories and later choosing aspects of the

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international organization that resonate with them, enhance the expression of his point of view. All his insights shed light on one result alone: the failure of the UN peacekeeping mission in South Sudan.

Upon probing further into the thoughts conveyed by the author, one finds that several reasons are contributing to the failure of UNMISS. The author deftly dissects the institutional and structural flaws in the UN's peacekeeping structure, proving its poor administration. He emphasizes problems within the institution, such as prejudice, lack of resources, insufficient funding, understaffed staff, institutional limitations, and even lack of specialization of authority figures within the mission that reduced the force's efficacy. Similarly, the ignorance of those in power towards the recent developments in the concerned territories significantly contributed to resistance from the local populations and their inefficiencies and ineffective peacekeeping. A significant drawback, however, was the inability of UNMISS to define its mandate for the Protection of Civilians (PoC) in practice and establish a strict separation from its predecessor mission.

The book uniquely emphasizes the psychological aspect of peacekeeping. Through an in-depth examination of peacekeepers' perspectives, thought processes, and what influences them, the author provides necessary information about the human element contributing to peacekeeping shortcomings. The reader's comprehension of the hindrances encountered by peacekeepers in the field and the problems involved in handling conflict in unstable situations is deepened by this comprehensive approach. Later, the book offers a convincing assessment of how the international community has handled peacekeeping in South Sudan. What makes the book specifically interesting is how Miller's expertise as a conflict analyst on the ground helps readers put the happenings into perspective. It highlights the shortcomings of traditional peacekeeping tactics and advocates for a more complex, situation-specific method of resolving disputes. He criticizes the UN's attempts at implementing a 'one size fits all' solution for most peacekeeping missions. The author shows how political agendas and preexisting biases have made it more difficult for the UN to effectively address the underlying causes of conflict in South Sudan through case studies and personally collected data that translates into evidence of his claims.

While the book offers a comprehensive analysis of peacekeeping failures in South Sudan, it also provides valuable insights into broader issues related to peace and security in the African context. By situating the South Sudanese case within the broader discourse on peacekeeping and conflict resolution, the author invites readers to reflect on the more considerable systemic challenges facing the international community in addressing conflicts on the continent. The book gives a thorough examination of South Sudan's peacekeeping deficiencies. However, it also offers an intuitive stance on the successes of its predecessor mission that aptly worked towards the 'Comprehensive Peace Agreement.' The author also encourages readers to consider the more significant structural problems the international community faces in resolving conflicts on the continent by placing the South Sudanese situation within the larger discourse on peacekeeping and conflict resolution.

While the book has succeeded immensely in what the author has tried to convey, a few aspects need to be addressed. First, the book focuses on the UN's peacekeeping mission in South Sudan, which can draw criticism. The book does not heed the broader contextual elements that fuel strife in the area, even though the UN's misdeeds and actions are essential to comprehending South Sudan's failings. Inadequate attention to elements like ethnic tensions, historical grudges, and the

presence of regional actors may result in an inaccurate understanding of the conflict's underlying roots. Secondly, once you overlook the informative aspect of the book, you find that the book's focus on the psychological aspect of peacekeeping oversimplifies the difficulties involved in making decisions in conflict areas. Personal prejudices and preconceptions certainly influence peacekeepers' actions, but other essential variables, such as political pressures and strategic considerations, are at play. Strictly concentrating on the psychological component leaves out these more prominent structural elements that influence peacekeeping efforts.

This particular work of Mark Millar is also subject to doubt for its reliance on personally collected evidence and lack of empirical support. Case studies and qualitative analysis are valuable tools, but they might not always give a complete picture of the intricate dynamics at work in South Sudan. A more thorough empirical examination incorporating comparative studies and quantitative data could bolster the book's claims and increase its legitimacy. Furthermore, by criticizing traditional peacekeeping tactics, the book might ignore the real-world difficulties and limitations that peacekeeping operations in conflict areas must overcome. Not only is it critical to point out the flaws in current strategies, but it is also critical to acknowledge the practical constraints and compromises that come with peacekeeping work. A more nuanced and comprehensive approach that considers broader contextual factors and engages with diverse perspectives could enhance the book's impact and relevance instead of placing all the blame on the workings of the UN.

The book could include a greater variety of viewpoints in the analysis, such as those of regional and local players and communities. Examining alternate peacekeeping strategies, including community-based programs and transitional justice procedures, would provide readers with a more sophisticated understanding of resolving conflicts. There is also a need to incorporate quantitative data that complements the author's arguments. Furthermore, incorporating a comparative analysis with other conflict-affected regions would enhance comprehension of the elements that influence the success or failure of peacekeeping operations. The analysis would stay current and relevant if it engaged with recent advancements and included more perspectives from the area, such as peacekeepers and practitioners. By making these suggestions, there is a chance to improve the book's contribution to the body of knowledge on peacekeeping and conflict resolution combined.

Overall, the book critically examines bias within the context of UN peacekeeping since it adds a deeper degree of complexity to the examination. Rather than attributing all mistakes to operational or institutional flaws, the author looks at the underlying biases that shape peacekeeping strategies and solutions. This critical point of view challenges conventional wisdom and makes readers reevaluate their assumptions about the workings of peacekeeping in South Sudan and other conflict zones. Notably, the author's unique experience in the field, professional contacts, and associated assessments bolster the veracity of his assertions regarding the UN and its operations. The book adds something timely and thought-provoking to peacekeeping and conflict resolution knowledge. Millar, quite well-versed in the voluntary task, highlights the necessity of recalibration and creativity in peacekeeping techniques by providing concrete instances of the real-world consequences of peacekeeping failures while establishing his arguments in careful analysis. His thoughtful observations and suggestions allow legislators and practitioners to get acquainted with the tricky terrain of conflict resolution, its contextual problems, and varying issues depending on the geographical proximity. The book underscores the critical need for reflection and

adaptation in international peacekeeping efforts in a world of ongoing war and instability. Millar's work undoubtedly stimulates critical thinking on the morality and efficacy of peacekeeping operations in South Sudan and all the current international interventions, in addition to advancing scholarly discourse. It is a must-read for academics, decision-makers, and professionals who want to comprehend the dynamics of war and peacebuilding in contemporary Africa.

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