

# RENT- SEEKING DIPLOMACY

HOW EGYPT DUPED SOUTH SUDAN  
INTO DEAD BILATERAL RELATIONS

A t e m G a i d e D u t

## Introduction

On Tuesday afternoon, May 4, 2021, the video of Kuot Akok, a 14- year-old South Sudanese boy being battered by Egyptian men, went viral on social media. The first thing that struck most South Sudanese who saw the video was the barbarity of the Egyptians, taunting the young boy, forcing him to wash dishes and mocking him in the process. It was like watching a group of hyenas descending over a prey. And then there was the government's silence, and especially that of the ambassador to Egypt, Joseph Mum Majak Ngor (his letter has just come out at the publication of this writing). To the surprise of many, the Egyptian ambassador to Juba was the first to release a choreographed statement, tiptoeing around, rather than addressing, the heart of the problem.

In the viral video seen by media outlets, including the Northern Corridor Morning Post, 14- year-old Kuot was beaten with his two cousins by Egyptian men with the aid of their disgraceful mother, who acted as matron to the crime in Ein Shams residential area in Cairo over the weekend. Kuot was trying to save his two female cousins, who had just been abducted in his presence and were being humiliated by the group of psychologically disturbed Egyptian criminals.

But Kuot Akok's story is not an exception; it is a common experience among South Sudanese living in Egypt. This reality of humiliation and abuse is a daily occurrence in the streets of Cairo. For years, South Sudanese refugees who live in Egypt have narrated the same story: that of harassment, racial abuse, murders, and kidnapping on the streets by Egyptian gangs under the watch of police without intervention.

Egyptian authorities and society have primarily managed to sustain this unchecked oppression of poor South Sudanese refugees by capitalizing on the weaknesses of various Sudanese governments and, especially recently, of the government in Juba. This paper seeks to analyze the human rights violations and hypocritical diplomacy of the Egyptian government. But, first, there is a need to create a solid foundation by assessing Egypt and her neighbours' geopolitical relationships.

### **Implications for the Riparian Brotherhood**

The riparian brotherhood refers to the countries bounded by the shared natural endowment, the Nile River. Being one of the longest rivers globally, the Nile covers about 3.1 million square kilometres, making up about 10% of the entire African continent. The river is divided into two: the Blue and the White Nile. While the Blue Nile originates from Lake Tana in Ethiopia, the White Nile eschews Rwanda's Kagera River.

The Blue and the White Niles meet in Khartoum, Sudan, and proceed to Egypt. 11 nations make up the riparian countries: Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, South Sudan, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan, Uganda and Tanzania.

Though the Nile River provides some succour to these riparian nations through water resources, the region still hosts some of the world's poorest countries with its attendant drought, food shortages, desertification, flooding, and ironically, water scarcity.

As a direct result of civil wars stemming from government neglect, new countries have emerged in an attempt to govern themselves independent of parent countries: a case in point being South Sudan and Eritrea. These dynamics directly impact the conflict over the Nile waters as Egypt, and other countries try to strategize for unlimited usage. The riparian countries, driven by the need to promote a common interest, regional economic integration, and strategic harmony, have engaged in several initiatives and cooperations named after Pre-Nile Basin Initiative and the Nile Basin Initiative.

The pre-Nile Basin Initiatives include the Hydromet (hydrometeorological survey of the Equatorial Lakes, 1967), the Undugu group (a Swahili Brotherhood in 1983), the Technical Cooperation Commission for the Promotion and Development of the Nile (TECCONILE, 1993). The Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) was established in February 1999, and it centres around equitable and reasonable utilization of the Nile waters without causing significant harm among the riparian countries.

To some extent, and before the self-problem set in, these initiatives addressed the stated goals. Under the common bond, each country in the riparian brotherhood was expected to protect the interest of member nations. When civil wars and other crises broke out in some countries, especially in Sudan, leading to the breakaway of South Sudan, other countries were ready asylums and refuge places for displaced persons.

Other countries in the riparian, mainly Egypt, were seen as "saviours."

To their credit, at the initial stages of the South Sudan crisis, Egypt came to the rescue of refugees. Moreover, the government initially made considerable efforts to respect migrants and refugee rights for displaced persons from adjoining countries. Nonetheless, Egypt had its internal conflicts to resolve.

Like most African countries would try to play down their internal crises and poke-nose to other countries' problems, Egypt attempted to create the impression that it would help South Sudan weather the storms during its internal troubles. However, the party was not going to be extended. Therefore, this brief paper discusses the accurate picture of Egypt-South Sudan's socio-political relations since the beginning of the last decade

### **Implications for the UNHCR Intervention**

One critical output of increased economic, political, and social crises is the rise in a humanitarian quagmire, especially the upsurge in the number of refugees worldwide. In terms of the population of refugees globally, Egypt ranks as one of the nations that record the highest number worldwide. In addition, Cairo had become a typical country of residence for refugees from countries such as Sudan, Iraq, Ethiopia, Palestine, and others who have been displaced from their home countries.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), an institution saddled with refugee welfare, has continuously extended refugees protection by setting standards for the global community on how to deal with refugees. However, despite efforts by UNHCR, the Government of Egypt, and several non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to provide protection and assistance for refugees in Egypt, not a few challenges are faced by refugees there, especially in terms of legal safety, security, economic and social welfare.

The UNHCR has adopted various strategies over the years to better respond to refugees' needs. For example, in 1997, the Commission initiated a Policy Statement on Refugees in Urban Areas, which stressed the need for self-reliance for urban refugees. Yet another policy statement followed the policy in 2009 to increase protection for refugees in cities and integrate them into their host countries' national life and institutions when possible.

It is no surprise that South Sudanese refugees, faced with the difficult choice of not having a future at home, flocked to Egypt due to linguistic and historical ties. Cross-border migration and trade started a long time ago, many of which were triggered by the prolonged Sudanese Civil Wars (both first and second) and the Darfur crisis. Many refugees were not officially recognized when subjected to individual Refugee Status Determination (RSD) by UNHCR in Egypt.

In essence, not all the refugees migrated as refugees but also as seekers of economic emancipation. This lack of formal designation as refugees led to the closure of many case files, but such refugees chose to remain in Egypt instead of returning home. Hence, they were not qualified for protection by the domestic laws of Egypt. They were equally denied access to several refugee-specific services offered through NGOs.

### **The Root of the Crisis**

South Sudanese are majorly the most vulnerable refugees in Egypt for racial, religious, and economic reasons. Some came down the Nile searching for education, drawn there by the deep historical, geographical, and linguistic ties.

Most fled from their country, seeking refuge from the war that initially led to the split of Sudan, and also by the war of attrition ravaging their country since 2013 only to be faced with systemic racism, leading to kidnappings, torture, killings, and a plethora of human rights violations. In addition, many South Sudanese have reported losing relatives to human trafficking.

The “big brother” position of Egypt to Sudan, and by extension to South Sudan, has been lost overnight. While the UNHCR granted temporary protection to the Sudanese in Egypt, it stopped the RSD for South Sudanese refugees. Due to the complexities involved in RSD, there was no more precise and recognizable resettlement process.

The complexity resulted in tension, misunderstandings, protests, and sometimes violence. Inherent to this misinformed decision by the UNHCR was the ironic situation of South Sudanese who ran to Egypt hoping to get away from the crisis at home but were now faced with severe humanitarian crises, including discrimination and extreme human rights violations. There were reported cases of several homeless South Sudanese in Egypt being treated as animals. Some inhuman treatment was meted out to these refugees:

1. They were not given the right to education like the Egyptians. Strategically placed barriers in language, culture, and cost hindered South Sudanese children from getting educated, especially at the primary level. This prompted some brave and entrepreneurial South Sudanese residents to start a local school: African Hope, whose primary purpose is to educate
2. A follow-up to this was the deprivation of South Sudanese from learning vocational trade in Egypt. Moreover, the refugees do not receive their full rights to practice even when they do so. Finally, in workplaces, South Sudanese were subjected to unfair discrimination, racism, torture, and killings by the traffickers while trying to make their way to Israel.
3. So cruel has the experiences of South Sudanese been in Egypt that many who still live there can hardly come to terms with the realities of their everyday lives. Sexual violence against South Sudanese women is of a horrific proportion considering the conservative nature of South Sudanese society. Egypt considers itself a 'model' Islamic country, but ironically, sexual abuse is prevalent in Egypt.

There is widely acknowledge sexual harassment of refugees, which NGOs do not even attempt to deny as the proportion is past the threshold of deniability. In recent years, violent sexual attacks against refugee South Sudanese women by Egyptian men have significantly increased, to the point that women take up self-defence in protecting themselves from the hand of the brutal and cruel Egyptian men and police.

Coupled with the above is a series of extra-judicial killings through secret trials, hounding, torture, and inexplicable disappearances prompted by President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi. He took office a year after ousting Mohamed Morsy and issued a sweeping 'counterterrorism' law that expanded the authorities' powers (especially the Security Agencies and the Interior Ministry) to hound illegal immigrants through all means, legally acceptable or otherwise. This barren lack of restraint can be categorized as a blatant dog whistle. In addition, there are behind-the-scene and criminal trials, verdicts of which are often pre-determined, including prosecutions in military courts for civil misdemeanours.

The dilemma continues to date. Unfair trials of immigrants and refugees thrive in both civilian and military courts. Government agencies, saddled with human rights protection responsibility, are too reluctant to investigate human rights violations and bring perpetrators to justice. As a result, south Sudanese refugee women continue to face sexual and gender-based violence.

The government continues to restrict religious minorities and prosecute people for defamation of the Islamic religion, regardless of whether the government can accurately and independently verify such accusations. Individuals face imprisonment for trumped-up charges of corruption and infidelity that many Egyptian law enforcers are guilty of. Hundreds of refugees and migrants are detained while seeking to cross the Mediterranean Sea. Courts keep handing down death sentences; refugees and immigrants are executed without due process, as long as it plays into populist rhetorics.

### **Perpetual Government Failure**

Across the world, governments sign pacts with other nations under the umbrella of some international bodies such as the United Nations, UNICEF, UNCHR, UNESCO, and several others to promote international cooperation, peace, and improved humanitarianism. However, there is a wide gap between signing a pact and adhering to it. Understanding how things should be and following them to the letter is essential for maintaining these pacts and, better yet, extending such cooperations into the most extended foreseeable future. When governments shy away from or neglect the basic principles that govern the world and nature, there will be a crisis, as shown in the Egyptian scenario.

The situation in the country is an appalling one, with a myriad of circumstances that build up over time to slowly chip away at the self-respect and dignity of South Sudanese refugees and immigrants in the country. Egypt has been plagued by this psychosocial disease for much of its existence, predating contemporary society.

The deliberate neglect and disregard of human rights for South Sudanese refugees are unacceptable. For a country that has been trying to endear itself to the region,

Egypt is doing a terrible job of not curbing human rights abuses, which signals to the fact that the failure to commit to basic human dignity and protect the most vulnerable refugees living in the country can be viewed through prisms of a failed government. These victims of human rights abuses are constantly fearing for their lives with the additional economic costs imposed by lack of job opportunities.

Or how does one exonerate the government from a situation where several people are tortured to death and several others killed in prisons and detention centres. All for claims that are not pleasant to the ears. Egyptian human rights activists have all been silenced; only a few, if any, are bold enough to clamour still and agitate for what truly is the right of the people that should be respected. Those who try to stir up protest for human rights protection are constantly being arrested and detained and subjected to terrible and callous torture, not even befitting animals.

These inhumane treatments range from electric shocks to rape, handcuffing detainees, and suspending them from open windows. This disorder has attracted the attention of various international bodies, and they have made multiple attempts to suggest ways to restore respect for human rights.

Violence of any nature, and especially violence targetting innocent civilians should be frowned upon by all who believe in basic human dignity. It does not require protracted policies detailing why and how governments should protect the vulnerable, both within its borders, or elsewhere. Such policies, if they exist, should originate from the natural and abstract so that they are easily explainable to those tasked with carrying them out

The human rights atmosphere in Egypt is at its worst since the first time it had its universal periodic review in [UPR] 2014 when various recommendations were made to the Egyptian government by the UN to which the country took no heed. How can a government which claims to put the masses' interest first neglect such critical recommendations by the United Nations?

Although the country accepted the recommendations to guarantee freedom of expression, association, and assembly and peaceful gathering in conjunction with securing the safety of journalists and human rights defenders, Egypt has consistently succeeded at limiting the works and efforts of non-governmental organizations. In summary, the Egyptian government is a chief contributor to the precarious human rights violations in Egypt.

Egypt would simply give a flimsy alibi to renege on pacts signed to prey on perceived weaker neighbours. Egypt uses her armed forces to harass protesters, human rights defenders, and other well-meaning citizens, and the judicial system in its corrupt state does not help the matter. Many human rights abuse cases are not given fair trials or somewhat truncated by an incomplete litigation process.

Between 2013 and 2018, Egyptian civil and military courts issued hundreds of death sentences. Going by the records right from 2014, civilian and military courts have handed down more than 1,891 death sentences and executed at least 174 persons, often following grossly unfair trials.

The Egyptian government has committed myriads of errors, one of which is executing people whose trial procedures were not resolved, a practice which is nothing short of utter wickedness.

In all of these, the judiciary has failed to hold police and armed forces responsible for their extra-judicial activities. As a result, security personnel are rarely held accountable for human rights violation such as torture, forced disappearances, extra-judicial executions and excessive use of force.

Coupled with these rights abuses is the Egyptian government's promotion of discrimination against religious minorities in law and practice. It has become increasingly difficult for Christians who are forestalled from worshipping, and their rights to build and repair or renovate church buildings are limited through a new law requiring approvals from several state bodies, including security agencies.

A good example here is the Nubians, who are recognized under the Egyptian 2014 Constitution as people who have the right to return to their original lands. However, to date, the government was yet to allow the Nubians to return to their lands.

Worst still, the Education Ministry in Egypt has not allowed schools in the far south of the country to teach the Nubian language even though the Nubian residents have always been demanding for it. Protests by Nubians have always been met with arrests and prolonged trials in the state security emergency courts.

Despite the claim by the Egyptian government that they had always punished or prosecuted officials who committed human rights abuses, whether in the security services or elsewhere in the government, the government has not comprehensively investigated human rights abuses, including most incidents of violence by security forces.

The gap between politicking and practical solutions has intensified the “above the law” stance of the security agents. Although the government had set out laws and punishment connected to issues or cases of human right violation, it enacted such laws reluctantly to make the world believe Egypt was doing their best as a government to curb the activities of human rights violations in Egypt horrific governance for the past 15 years.

The Egyptian government publish laws it has no interest in implementing, and such laws include internationally accepted norms which the country throws into the abyss as soon as it deems them too taxing. Some of these laws are meant to protect the most vulnerable by prohibiting domestic violence and slave work, and poor wages, but authorities may apply provisions relating to assault with accompanying penalties,, making the case all the more complicated for victims.

Again, the Egyptian government occasionally uses its powers to arrest striking workers and prosecute them with unfair charges rarely reversed. This lack of employee support exposes workers to exploitation by employers who, in collaboration with public officials, deny their employees fair pay under the law. Research indicates that poor refugee families who help with domestic chores, and by extension, poor Egyptians are under the mercy of their employers, and things get worse rather than better when these employees try to undertake collective bargaining for fair wages. Often, when the government gets involved, it does this to quell public outrage.

The government, instead of enforcing the law and pursuing justice against influential business owners and other mal-practising rich people who violate citizens' or refugees' human rights, it cruelly promotes and supports the human right violation of South Sudanese and other refugees who come seeking for protection and a future for their families.

Some Western countries and Germany, in particular, continue to express grave concern over the level of human right violations against refugees, migrants, and citizens under President Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi of Egypt. The government has consistently cracked down on human rights activists, hounding them into detentions under phony charges. In addition, human rights defenders are accused of promoting terrorist attacks, inciting the public against the government, or propagating fake news on social media channels.

Berlin particularly frowns at illegal arrests and detention of accredited journalists, using military courts to try civilians for funny charges. Again, under scrutiny is the crackdown on family values, draconian cybercrimes laws, and brutality. These same allegations have earlier been raised by the Global Civil Society Alliance (CIVICUS) in 2019 when it reported that the Egyptian government had arrested more than 2000 protesters in a mass sweep and unprecedented corruption of the Abdel Fattah el-Sisi government.

### **South Sudan-Egypt Bilateral Relations: A Rent-Seeking Diplomacy**

Since the break from Sudan, South Sudan has taken every available step to play to the tune of Egypt, at the expense of a long-time ally, Ethiopia, a country that gave South Sudan its very first opportunity of being state. This decision to play to Egypt's tune has been driven by weaknesses inherent in the Juba administration, knitted up by the aspirations of advisers whose very loyalty to South Sudan is questionable.

Since South Sudan's independence in 2011, there have been several visits between Egyptian and their South Sudanese counterparts at the highest levels of government. Egypt was one of the early 'allies' to recognize South Sudan as a sovereign nation. As early as July 2011, the Egyptian Prime Minister visited the country to sway public opinion about Egypt's image. , sandwiched between disgust and nonchalant among South Sudanese.

The Egyptian PM and other diplomatic missions to South Sudan have been purposeful, aimed at showing comradeship and loyalty and giving a helping hand in the face of growing humanitarian crises after South Sudan embarrassed itself with another war in 2013 after gaining independence. However, the government of Egypt has made several attempts to engage warring factions in South Sudan in a dialogue that seems to be self-serving than genuine.

As a general statement of facts, the Egyptian government would not achieve much as “he who comes to justice must come with equity”. A country that could not manage its full-blown internal crises was masquerading as a saviour, trying to curb an inevitable situation in South Sudan. But, for most observers, Egypt was chasing shadows.

The South Sudanese public views Egypt as a despotic undertaker, a country whose only goal has always been what it ludicrously perceives as a God-given right: the waters of the river Nile. Accordingly, Cairo has been more focused on securing the support of South Sudan in its attempt to craft an image of a friendly, historical neighbour. But such interest has been a smokescreen for covering up an entirely separate scheme: isolating and managing the influence of Ethiopia.

### **The Politics of the River Nile**

On November 28, 2020, President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi visited Juba, and the meeting was held behind closed doors with an after-meeting photo-op with journalists to give the public the suitable version of the meeting, which was regional security and the usage of the Nile waters. However, neither El-Sisi nor Kiir mentioned Ethiopia, the country currently at the heart of either issue.

In another meeting with the South Sudanese irrigation Minister, Manawa Peter, in the presence of irrigation Minister Mohamed Abdel-Ati, Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly stressed that Egypt is ready to offer all support to South Sudan and set up investment in the 'brotherly' country.

As much as one would want to applaud the contributions of Egypt to the development of South Sudan, the conniving spirit of Egypt cannot be ignored, and as such, the need for speculations as to why Egypt keeps showing public support is open for public scrutiny. For example, could the whole drama of support be due to what connects them, the River Nile? Perhaps a historical knowledge of their relationship will help us understand the matter better.

In 1929, Britain and Egypt struggled to gain dominion over Sudan, which could be best described as quasi-control rather than full-on colonialism. Egypt shares a long border with Sudan, with an existing bilateral agreement, and one of the benefits of this agreement was sharing the Nile water.

The Nile could be regarded as Egypt's lifeline, even though it has one of its tributaries [White Nile] flow through both South Sudan and Sudan and originate from upstream in Rwanda. Therefore, to appease Egypt at the expense of Sudan, the sharing ratio favoured Egypt [3:1].

Britain and Egypt reached this baseline agreement in 1929. However, it should be noted that other riparian countries were not consulted over this bilateral agreement at the time. This disillusionment and the idea that Egypt had to police the Nile waters and be consulted for developmental projects on the Nile were unacceptable to these riparian countries of Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda. This rejection of the 1929 treaty that gave Egypt undisputed control over the Nile waters culminated in the other countries creating the Nile Basin Initiative in 1999.

Before this, Sudan was already expressing interest in changing the terms of agreement with Egypt so that it would be able to use a larger share of the river flow. It should be noted that the principal tributary of the Nile is the blue Nile and has its origin at Lake Tana in Ethiopia. The Blue Nile supplies about 80% of the Nile waters during the rainy season.

The behaviour of Egypt with regards to the Nile River has prompted surrounding countries to engage in a series of actions (open and discreet) to have absolute control over it. One of these critical initiatives began in 2011 when Ethiopia decided to build the GERD (the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam) across the Nile to harness its water for electricity generation. The dam has about 63 million cubic meters of water and 16 turbines, generating 6,450 megawatts of electricity annually for Ethiopia. (6.45 GW). This electricity is sufficient to power Ethiopia and all three eastern States of South Sudan: Unity, Upper Nile, Jonglei, and the Pibor Administrative Area.

Egypt has taken issue with the development of the GERD, mainly backed by Sudan, also an earlier beneficiary of colonial-era Nile water agreements. Sudan became equally threatened by the cessation of South Sudan, with an extensive portion of the Nile and oil gone south with the new country. As a result, both Sudan and Egypt have become increasingly

worried about the impact of the GERD coupled with transformational changes in South Sudan, requiring increased usage of the Nile waters.

To earn South Sudan's sympathy concerning the use of the Nile and its resources, Egypt had to parley South Sudan to form a formidable opposition to Ethiopia's potential dominant use of the river. Egypt's incessant meddling in the 'security and 'stability of South Sudan centres around the economic gain derivable from the Nile River rather than a sincere conversation aimed at enhancing internal capacity in the country.

Ethiopia, having built the GERD, limiting Egypt's access to the 80% of the Nile's overall flow, gave Egypt little choice but to force the latter to tinker around securing full access to the 20% discharge from the White Nile running through South Sudan. In furtherance to strategically position itself to gain control of this portion of the Nile, Egypt established peacekeeping troops and clinics in parts of South Sudan with potential dam construction projects such as the Fulla Rapids in Nimule, Mongala Port, Bor Port, and other strategic areas along the Nile. In addition to 'policing' these riparian sites, Egypt has also been providing support to President Kiir and his government directly and covertly to micromanage development policies particularly those concerning the Nile.

This support for South Sudan comes with the understanding that Juba will back Cairo in negotiations over the Nile with Ethiopia because no consensus has been reached after several meetings and talks on the issue. In practice, Egyptian authorities are aware of President Kiir's quagmire with legitimacy and the crashing unpopularity. Cairo has been quick to capitalize on these loopholes to muzzle Kiir and his government into supporting the Egyptian cause.

If South Sudan follows Ethiopia's lead and builds more dams and irrigation schemes to support economic development and a growing population, both Egypt and Sudan will experience a considerable shortfall in their water supply. Being keenly aware of this, Egypt has tried to devise ways to support the 'Presidency', rather than the country, and Kiir is reciprocally unable or unwilling to uphold historical ties that Ethiopians and South Sudanese have, dating back to the days of the struggle for independence from the North.

Moreover, Egypt's interest in South Sudan is riddled with absolute hypocrisy. A country that has total disregard for the human rights of South Sudanese and other refugees, playing the good neighbour to other countries is simply deceptive and vain.

### **Beyond the Schemes: A Look Into the Future**

“Egypt has often kept a close eye on Sudan's political developments, fearing a transformation in its backyard could disrupt its own economic, strategic, and security interests. Khartoum's latest revolution has left Cairo uncertain as to how it may impact the country”. Jonathan Fenton Harvey

It is expedient to know that Egypt has always seen Sudan (North and South) as part of its territory, so it natural (at least in the Egyptian perspective) to posture and 'support' every strand of development in these countries. Naturally, therefore, crises in the two Sudans are expected to take some toll on the economy and politics of Egypt.

The country monitors events in South Sudan because it fears that any transformation in the latter could disrupt its own economic, strategic, and security interests. Thus, it is surprising that Egypt, which opposed the secession call by South Sudan back in 1997 because of its stake in the Nile River, could now turn around to stoutly stand behind the now seceded South Sudan after the breakaway.

A shifting international policy is both hypocritical and unwise. According to Deng Aling, “Egypt aimed to secure the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement's (SPLM's) influence over the south, unify the movement to gain influence over the country, and prevent attempts from Sudan, Israel, and Ethiopia to gain a strategic foothold in the South. This was meant to secure Egypt’s control over the Nile and prevent external attempts to use its water”. Egypt's ultimate goal in rendering all the help to the country is but noble. So, what does the future hold for bilateral relations built on deceit and hypocrisy? Egyptian Prime Minister and leader of the nationalist Wafd Party, Sa’d Zaghalul Pasha, stated as far back as 1924, which is now playing out today (Mills, 2014):

“This is our situation in respect to the Sudan. We spend money there, we shed blood there, we endure hardships there, and our fathers endured such before us, and we draw life from that river which pours forth from the highest reaches of the Sudan. In any case, it is impossible unless we were a lifeless people, that we leave one speck of the Sudan for others”.

It is accurate to assert that Egypt would have wished that the crises in South Sudan continue so it can pretend to help in curbing humanitarian crises so that authorities in South Sudan will see it as the benevolent historical neighbour and saviour and therefore cooperate with the country to dominate the use of Nile resources, at the expense of the other countries. At best, this exploit between Egypt and South Sudan will further impoverish South Sudan and enrich Egypt in the future.

### **A Warning Note**

In all these, what has been the stance of South Sudanese political authorities? South Sudanese leaders have failed to read between the lines in Egypt's actions. The president seems not to be moved by several reported cases (most of which have been confirmed) of human rights abuses against South Sudanese residents in Egypt who live there as refugees and immigrants.

An accusation that the President is personally benefiting from the misfortune of his poor people who brave daily humiliation and suffering in Egypt is something that is becoming indisputable. Yet, if this premise were unfair, how does one explain Kiir's continued and consistent support for the Egyptian government in the face of glaring atrocities perpetrated against his people?

As recently as 2019, over 1,000 human rights violations were reported, though many are not registered for fear of more persecution from the perpetrators and authorities alike. Yet, President Kiir and his government and other leaders turn a blind eye to these gross violations in the name of playing regional politics of peace and harmony.

### **Recommendations**

Refugee women, all too often, have become the objects of writings, not the subjects. There are hidden dimensions of single women's refugee experience through histories unable to be communicated due to language barrier, failure to recover specific detailed memories of violence in a life of endured conflict, and the inability of individual language when spoken in isolation to form a collective history of an event.

By noting that the women with a history of sexual violence breach the difficulties in speaking of their personal experience only through communications to UNHCR to secure asylum and refugee status, we may begin to understand why women are often portrayed as the object of the violence, not the subjects of the ethnographies.

We may also begin to understand why women and young girls, particularly with a history of sexual violence, do not choose repatriation despite post-CPA pressures to return home and the increasingly violent, racist, and economically challenging living conditions they face daily in Egypt.

South Sudanese refugees continue to be spoken of as either the carriers of community shame or perpetual victims. Because of the protection crisis faced by refugees in Egypt, it is essential that strategies aimed at temporary local integration be developed and implemented.

Suppose this relationship between the two countries is inherited by the next generation of South Sudanese leaders. In that case, as the first step in that direction, Egypt must ensure that South Sudanese refugees have unfettered access to the Egyptian labour market to enable them to be economically self-sufficient. In addition, the Government of Egypt must immediately address the issue of protection under the law for all residents of that country irrespective of the country of origin.

The High Commissioner for Refugees recently said there is today an opportunity for a new beginning for refugee protection in Egypt (Kagan 2011;1). Egypt cannot remain an indifferent host (Sadek 2010); the country must become more engaged with South Sudanese refugees who live in the country. This engagement will benefit refugees and Egyptian citizens alike and have ripple effects on the geopolitics of the two countries, well beyond the dubious schemes over Nile waters.

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