

JANUARY/FEBRUARY TRENDS

Pipeline damage and the war in Sudan disrupted oil exports, threatening the economy and regime stability. Prospects for peaceful elections, slated for December, remained slim amid growing calls for postponement due to lack of preparedness. Meanwhile, intercommunal violence escalated across South Sudan, killing hundreds.

WHAT TO WATCH IN THE COMING WEEKS AND MONTHS

1 Violence could escalate in the run up to and during elections

President Kiir will likely continue to press for holding elections **by December**.

The National Electoral Commission (NEC) will likely face major obstacles to deliver on the electoral calendar, including demarcating new constituencies **by June**.

VP Riek Machar will likely continue to call for a new constitution and the unification of previously warring armed forces, or else Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in-Opposition (SPLM-IO) will boycott elections.

TO WATCH Oil revenue could affect the economy, including budget allocated for elections; when NEC finalises the demarcation of political constituencies; possible extension of political transition; and ways SPLM-IO-government relations develop, including through dialogue initiatives.

Potential Consequences

Tensions over the boundaries of new constituencies could fuel deadly clashes between local militias, for example in Upper Nile, between Shilluk, Dinka and Nuer communities. Electoral tensions could also strain peace talks and fuel local conflicts eg, between National Salvation Front (NAS) and the government in Central Equatoria, in Jonglei or between rebel commander Stephen Buay's forces and the government in Mayom county and Ruweng Administrative Area.

Fighting for positions and gubernatorial nominations within the ruling party or between rival candidates including from SPLM-IO, could fuel violence eg, in Western Equatoria, in Western Bahr el Ghazal, between Dinka elites surrounding Kiir in Warrap, between government (or government aligned) forces eg, in Northern Bahr el Ghazal, between government factions in Greater Pibor Administrative Area, and/or between the SPLM-IO and government in Southern Unity state. SPLM-IO could return to rebellion if they withdraw from the peace agreement.

2 Sudan's civil war could spill over into South Sudan

Sudan's paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) could destabilise disputed Abyei area, notably if it tries to capture oilfields in and around Abyei from the Sudanese army.

Buay and Nuer fighters will likely continue fighting alongside the RSF, raising the possibility of a South Sudanese rebel group accessing RSF

arms and ammunition, battlefield experience and training camps.

If Kiir's government is alienating Nuer spiritual leader Gai Machiek, his armed followers might join Buay.

TO WATCH Evolution of Sudanese conflict and who controls oil fields in Abyei box and beyond.

Potential Consequences

If there is no oil, the economy will collapse (90 per cent of GDP is oil exports), putting more stress on an already fragile state.

3 South Sudan could further disintegrate along ethnic lines

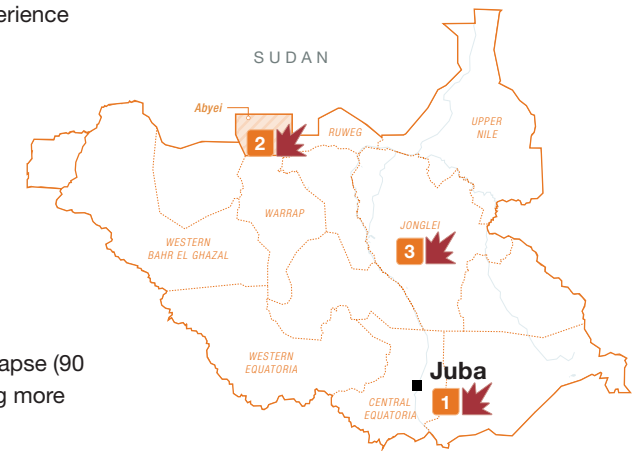
Authorities will likely continue to struggle to pay salaries, resorting to extorting ordinary people via checkpoints, conscription and taxation.

Ethnic violence will likely rise, especially in places like Jonglei and Abyei where fighting between Twic Dinka from Warrap state and Ngok Dinka from Abyei has already claimed hundreds of lives in recent months.

TO WATCH Climate disasters set to worsen situation; Jonglei State and Abyei area.

Potential Consequences

As friction grows along ethnic lines, violent clashes will likely multiply with a high toll on civilians. It will also heighten the risk of Kiir being ousted, and further weaken the state apparatus. All this carries with it the risk of complete fragmentation of the country.



Flashpoint

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On the Horizon offers a snapshot into emergent conflicts and crises in the next three to six months in a clear, accessible format, identifying triggers, key dates to watch and potential behaviour of conflict actors, to support global conflict prevention efforts.

