

# Discussion on children in conflict and democracy: the case of South Sudan

 30 January 2024

 10:00 – 13:00

 **Video Conference Centre (VCC),  
HSRC Building, 134 Pretorius  
Street, Pretoria**

Click [here](#) to register and to join via Zoom.

The purpose of the event is to facilitate a discussion among engaged scholars, government representatives, civil society organisations, non-governmental organisations, and international organisations on youth-related policy in South Sudan. The main objective of the discussion is for stakeholders to collectively contribute toward shaping the collective research agenda toward youth development and a prosperous Africa through engaged research.

**Background:** The Republic of South Sudan gained independence from Sudan on 9 July 2011 following a 98.83% vote in favour of this outcome during the January 2011 South Sudanese independence referendum. South Sudan's official break-away from Sudan was a result of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 2005, also known as the Naivasha Agreement. This agreement intended to put an end to the Second Sudanese Civil War, which raged between the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement and the central government of Sudan from 5 June 1983 to 9 January 2005 for South Sudan's regional autonomy. The cause of the tensions between Sudan and South Sudan have included ethno-religious differences, exemplified by the resistance of South Sudan to the imposition of Sharia law on non-Muslim southerners.

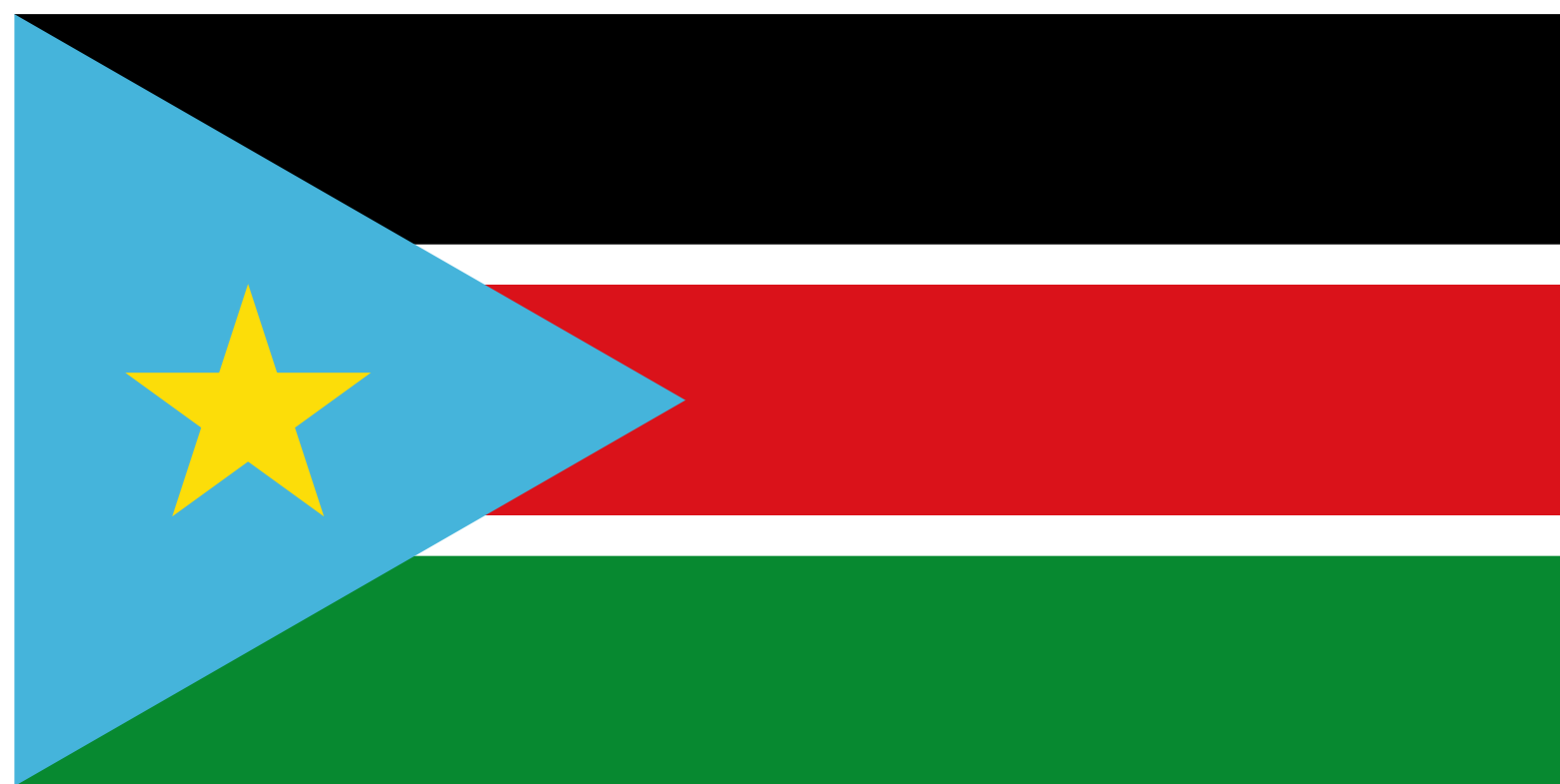
Despite achieving success in the long struggle to gain independence, South Sudan has been embroiled in protracted and intractable conflict, often with children playing a key role on the frontlines for both the government and opposition forces. The population of South Sudan primarily consists of young people with an estimated 70% of the population being under 30 years old. The nation also falls within the ranks of the world's top ten countries affected by the issue of child soldiers. In addition to this, children in South Sudan are often exposed to various violations, including sexual violence, disfigurement, abduction, and restricted access to humanitarian aid. Various initiatives are aimed at reintegrating affected children, – including, the 2015 Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan, the 2020 Comprehensive Action Plan, and the UNICEF reintegration initiative aimed at providing comprehensive support, including psychosocial aid, healthcare, education and community reintegration assistance. The initiatives – require the support of strong institutions, the availability of resources, and a stable and peaceful environment where targeted policies can be implemented.

The Africa Institute of South Africa (AISA), the Africa-focused division in the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) will host a roundtable discussion with representatives from the government, non-governmental organisations, and international bodies to discuss how to develop and implement effective handover protocols and reintegration strategies for children of war in South Sudan, paving the way for a more stable and peaceful future.

## Objectives:

The following objectives will be explored:

- Strengthening legal frameworks and mechanisms to promote accountability, ensuring the protection and justice of children.
- Examining the role of international protocols and community in the process of reintegrating children.
- Devising a plan to ensure the sustainability of reintegration efforts.



## For inquiries, please contact:

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