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Original Article

## Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Interventions and the Attainment of Peace in the East African Region: A Case Study of IGAD in the South Sudan Peace Efforts

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The study examines the overall effectiveness of the IGAD as a peacemaker in the conflict in the Republic of South Sudan from its independence in 2011 to 2023. This was done through examining the effectiveness, institutional framework, strategies, and challenges of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in resolving the South Sudan conflict. Grounded on the realist and liberal institutionalist theories of international relations, which provide competing yet complementary lenses for analysing IGAD's interventions in South Sudan, the study employed a mixed methods approach with a strong emphasis on descriptive quantitative analysis and qualitative interviews. Data was collected from key stakeholders to assess IGAD's peacebuilding interventions, the implementation of the 2015 Peace Agreement, and the institutional structures supporting these efforts. Findings reveal that IGAD's role in peace mediation, stakeholder engagement, power-sharing proposals, and humanitarian assistance has been partially effective. However, significant limitations persist, including the absence of peacekeeping operations, weak enforcement mechanisms, technical loopholes in peace agreements, and persistent internal and external political interferences. The study also highlights gaps in sensitising warring parties on the implications of war, disarmament efforts, and equitable stakeholder inclusion. Institutional weaknesses, such as a lack of standardised monitoring systems and limited capacity to address competing member state interests, further constrain IGAD's effectiveness. Based on these findings, the study recommends expanding IGAD's mandate to include peacekeeping and disarmament operations, institutionalising monitoring and enforcement bodies, promoting neutral and inclusive dialogue processes, and strengthening internal accountability frameworks. Future research should explore comparative regional peacebuilding models, the role of grassroots actors in IGAD interventions, and the long-term sustainability of regional peace agreements to deepen understanding and guide reforms in regional conflict resolution mechanisms.

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## INTRODUCTION

War and political violence in the Global South have remained endemic since World War II, with contemporary conflicts increasingly characterised by protracted instability and regional spillover effects (Omeje, K. 2017). From Afghanistan to Sudan, these crises often stem from colonial-era divisions, resource competition, and weak governance structures, persisting for decades despite international intervention efforts (Elmukashfi, 2020). In post-colonial Africa, intra-state conflicts have become particularly pervasive, with Sub-Saharan Africa accounting for over 60% of global conflict-related fatalities since 1990 (Njagi, 2018). This landscape necessitated robust regional mechanisms like the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), which emerged as a critical actor in mediating conflicts in the Horn of Africa, including its pivotal role in South Sudan's independence through the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) (Agwanda et al., 2021).

IGAD's interventions in the region reflect both its institutional ambition and its constraints. Originally established in 1986 as the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD), the organisation was revitalised in 1996 to address broader security and development challenges, including the cyclical conflicts plaguing the Horn of Africa (Asare-Nuamah, 2017). Its mediation efforts in South Sudan from the CPA to the 2018 Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) highlight a

pattern of proactive but uneven engagement. For instance, during the 2013–2015 civil war, IGAD deployed three special envoys from Ethiopia, Kenya, and Sudan to broker ceasefires, though these were frequently violated due to the intransigence of warring factions (Aeby, 2022). The 2015 peace talks in Addis Ababa, which saw regional leaders like Uganda's Museveni and Kenya's Kenyatta pressuring President Kiir to sign the agreement, underscored IGAD's reliance on high-level political leverage. Yet, as realist theorists would argue, such efforts were often undermined by member states' competing interests, such as Uganda's military support to the government of President Kiir and Sudan's alleged backing of Dr. Riek Machar, revealing the organisation's vulnerability to geopolitical rivalries (Irit, 2014).

South Sudan's trajectory epitomises the challenges of post-conflict state-building. Despite achieving independence in 2011, the world's youngest nation rapidly descended into civil war by 2013, fuelled by ethnic rivalries between the Dinka and Nuer communities, political fragmentation, and competition over oil resources (de Vries & Justin, 2019; Pinaud, 2021). The conflict's persistence through 2022 demonstrates the failure of successive peace agreements to address the root causes of violence (RJMEC, 2022; UNSC, 2022). The conflict's roots trace back to colonial policies: the Turko-Egyptian and Anglo-Egyptian administrations (1821–1956) institutionalised a north-south divide through exploitative slave economies and differential

governance systems (Dor, 2017). This historical legacy, compounded by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement's (SPLM) failure to establish inclusive institutions post-independence, has perpetuated cycles of violence (Pinaud, 2021; de Vries, 2022). The SPLM's dominance, evidenced by President Kiir's 92% victory in the 2010 elections, created a winner-takes-all system that excluded rival factions, culminating in the 2013 split between President Kiir and Dr. Machar (Thomas, 2020). The subsequent regionalisation of the conflict, with Uganda, Sudan, and proxy forces entrenching their interests, further complicated IGAD's mediation (Mwai & Wasara, 2021).

IGAD's structural limitations have persistently hampered its effectiveness. The organisation's ad hoc mediation model, lack of enforcement mechanisms, and reliance on member-state contributions (both financial and political) have rendered its peacebuilding efforts reactive rather than transformative. For example, the 2018 R-ARCSS, while hailed as a milestone, has suffered from slow implementation due to ongoing mistrust among South Sudanese elites and limited IGAD capacity to monitor compliance (UNSC, 2022). Liberal institutionalists might argue that IGAD's potential lies in its ability to foster collective action, but its successes remain contingent on the political will of states prioritising regional stability over narrow interests (Tieku, 2022).

This study examined the effectiveness of IGAD as a peacemaker in South Sudan from 2011 to 2023, anchored in realist and liberal institutionalist theories. By analysing historical, political, and operational dimensions, the research aims to advance evidence-based recommendations for enhancing regional conflict-resolution frameworks.

### **Problem Statement**

Despite IGAD's critical role as the primary regional peacebuilder in East Africa, its interventions in South Sudan have been marked by inconsistent outcomes, revealing systemic gaps between policy objectives and practical

implementation (Ajang, 2016). Since South Sudan's independence in 2011, IGAD has brokered peace agreements, including the 2015 Peace Agreement and the 2018 Revitalised Agreement (RARCSS). However, these efforts have failed to achieve sustainable peace, with recurrent violence, ceasefire violations, and political fragmentation undermining progress. The persistence of conflict suggests fundamental flaws in IGAD's approach, particularly its inability to enforce compliance, manage member states' competing interests, and address the root causes of South Sudan's instability (Zambakari et al., 2019).

A key issue is IGAD's lack of institutional capacity to mediate complex, multi-actor conflicts effectively. The organisation's reliance on ad hoc diplomacy, rather than a structured conflict resolution framework, has resulted in fragmented peace processes and weak accountability mechanisms. Additionally, the partisan involvement of member states, particularly Uganda's military support for President Salva Kiir (Mwai, 2021) and Sudan's alleged backing of rebel factions (Wasara, 2021), has eroded IGAD's neutrality, further complicating mediation efforts. These challenges are compounded by South Sudan's internal dynamics, including unaddressed ethnic divisions, weak governance structures, and competition over oil resources, which IGAD's current strategies have failed to resolve (Pinaud, 2021; de Vries & Schomerus, 2022).

The consequences of these shortcomings are severe, with prolonged conflict displacing 4.3 million people (OCHA, 2023) and destabilising the wider region through cross-border violence and refugee flows (UNDP, 2022). Without addressing IGAD's structural limitations, including chronic underfunding, inconsistent stakeholder engagement, and the absence of enforceable sanctions (Tieku, 2022), future interventions risk repeating past failures. This study's examination of these systemic challenges draws on field data (2020-2023) to offer evidence-based recommendations for enhancing IGAD's conflict resolution framework.

## Objective of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of the IGAD as a peacemaker in the conflict in the Republic of South Sudan from its independence in 2011 to 2023.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Theoretical Review

This study employs realist and liberal institutionalist theories to analyse IGAD's interventions in South Sudan. Realism, as articulated by Morgenthau (1948) and Mearsheimer (2018), views state behaviour as driven by power maximisation and security interests, explaining how Uganda's support for Kiir and Sudan's alleged backing of Machar reflected strategic calculations rather than genuine peacebuilding (Mwai, 2022; Wasara, 2021; Tieku, 2022). This perspective clarifies why competing national interests have constrained IGAD's effectiveness (de Waal, 2021). Conversely, liberal institutionalism (Keohane, 1984; Acharya, 2021) emphasises IGAD's potential to foster cooperation through norms and frameworks, evidenced by its mediation platforms like the High-Level Revitalization Forum (RJMEC, 2022) and the R-ARCSS agreement (Pinaud, 2021). However, implementation challenges, including weak enforcement and non-compliance (ICG, 2023), reveal institutional limitations amid power asymmetries (Brosig, 2022), offering a nuanced understanding of IGAD's mediation dynamics.

### Effectiveness of IGAD Interventions in South Sudan Peace Processes

Academic assessments of IGAD's mediation role present a complex paradox where notable achievements are consistently overshadowed by systemic shortcomings. The organisation's most significant accomplishment remains its facilitation of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), which not only ended Africa's longest-running civil war but also created the pathway for South Sudan's independence through a meticulously negotiated referendum process (Baker, 2011). This success demonstrated IGAD's potential as an effective mediator when member

states share strategic interests and regional stability objectives. However, the organisation's subsequent interventions in South Sudan's internal conflicts reveal a troubling pattern of deteriorating effectiveness. The 2015 Agreement almost collapsed within twelve months of its signing, while the 2018 Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) has faced implementation delays affecting over 60% of its stipulated timelines (ICG, 2021). This declining performance trajectory aligns with what Brosig (2020) identifies as the "regional organization dilemma" phenomenon, where repetitive peace processes that fail to deliver substantive outcomes gradually erode participant confidence and breed agreement fatigue among stakeholders.

A comparative analysis of regional mediation efforts reveals both parallels and instructive contrasts with IGAD's experience in South Sudan. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) demonstrated greater effectiveness in Liberia and Sierra Leone through its combination of robust peacekeeping mandates and clear enforcement mechanisms (Adebajo, 2018). Similarly, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) achieved relative success in Mozambique by incorporating civil society actors and traditional leaders into the peace process (Nathan, 2019). These cases highlight what appears to be a critical gap in IGAD's approach: its persistent over-reliance on elite-level political negotiations at the expense of broader societal inclusion, creating what Paffenholz (2020) terms "elite peace" agreements that lack grassroots legitimacy and staying power. The organization's challenges are further compounded by its ad hoc approach to mediation, where each new initiative essentially restarts the process rather than building on past lessons (Tieku, 2021), and by the absence of robust compliance mechanisms, with documented cases showing combatants exploiting monitoring gaps in 78% of reported ceasefire violations (RJMEC, 2022).

The theoretical lenses of realism and liberal institutionalism provide valuable frameworks for understanding these patterns. From a realist



perspective (Mearsheimer, 2018; Allison, 2022), IGAD's struggles reflect the inherent limitations of regional organisations operating in contexts where member states prioritise national interests over collective security. Uganda's military intervention in support of President Kiir (Mwai, 2022) and Sudan's alleged backing of Riek Machar (Wasara, 2021) exemplify how geopolitical rivalries systematically undermine IGAD's neutrality and cohesion. The organisation's experience mirrors challenges faced by ASEAN in the Cambodian conflict, where member states' competing interests similarly constrained effective collective action (Acharya, 2021). Conversely, liberal institutionalism (Keohane & Nye, 2020) directs attention to IGAD's structural deficiencies, particularly its lack of standing mediation units, inconsistent funding mechanisms, and weak enforcement capacities, which comparative analysis shows to be significantly more pronounced than in counterparts like ECOWAS or SADC.

### **Institutional Analysis of IGAD's Mandate and Structures**

IGAD's institutional evolution from its 1986 origins as a drought-focused body to a security actor reflects broader trends in African regional governance. Like ECOWAS and ASEAN, IGAD expanded from economic cooperation to peace and security functions (Brosig, 2020). Its formal structure, including the Assembly of Heads of State and Conflict Early Warning Mechanism, conceals operational fragmentation, with decision-making concentrated at the political level while implementation relies on an under-resourced secretariat. This imbalance creates what Bereketeab (2022) terms "institutional overstretch," where ambitious mandates outpace capacity, particularly in complex cases like South Sudan.

Compared to organisations like the EU or OAS, IGAD's ad hoc crisis response mechanisms result in slower interventions (ICG, 2022). Its small membership amplifies individual state influence, as seen when Uganda and Sudan swayed South

Sudan's mediation (Mwai, 2022), a dynamic paralleling Gulf Cooperation Council challenges in Yemen (Legrenzi, 2021). Financial dependence (72% external funding) exacerbates instability, fostering donor-driven agendas that disrupt program continuity, a pattern also observed in OSCE operations (Galbreath, 2021; Brosig, 2022).

IGAD's most critical weakness is its lack of enforcement authority, contrasting sharply with the AU's intervention protocols or NATO's mechanisms (Aning, 2021). This gap undermines implementation, as seen in South Sudan's stalled security arrangements (RJMEC, 2022) and mirrors challenges in Mali's 2015 agreement and Bosnia's Dayton Accords. Without binding tools, IGAD struggles to transition from mediation to sustainable peace, enabling factions to exploit implementation gaps (de Waal, 2022).

### **Strategies and Challenges in IGAD's Peacebuilding Approach**

IGAD's evolving approach in South Sudan reflects both progress and persistent gaps in managing complex conflicts. Initially focused on high-level diplomacy during the CPA era, IGAD gradually incorporated military monitoring through CTSAMM, power-sharing mechanisms, and economic incentives (Pinaud, 2021). This shift aligns with contemporary integrated peacebuilding frameworks that emphasise multi-track approaches (de Coning, 2018; Autesserre, 2021). However, only 15% of IGAD's peace process funding supports implementation, while 60% is spent on negotiations (Tieku, 2022), echoing funding imbalances documented in recent UN operations (UN DPO, 2022).

Key challenges hinder strategic execution. First, IGAD's negotiation processes systematically exclude critical actors; women comprised less than 25% of participants in the 2018 peace talks, and civil society representation remains inadequate (UN Women, 2022). This contrasts with inclusive frameworks like Ethiopia's 2022 peace process, which achieved 40% women's participation (AU, 2022). Second, verification mechanisms remain under-resourced, with only

300 personnel currently deployed across South Sudan's conflict zones (RJMEC, 2022), falling significantly below international standards. Third, IGAD continues to prioritise political transitions over security sector reform, repeating patterns seen in Afghanistan's failed peace process (Mukhopadhyay, 2022).

Despite these issues, IGAD has adopted innovative elements in its recent mediation efforts. The R-ARCSS's economic power-sharing provisions and state-level peace committees (RJMEC, 2021) draw lessons from successful models in Nepal and Liberia (Pouligny, 2021). Enhanced partnerships with the AU and UN reflect evolving burden-sharing approaches documented in Mali's peace process (Souleymane, 2022). However, critical gaps persist in sequencing security sector reform with political transitions (Day & Hunt, 2020) and operationalising local ownership principles (Leonhardt, 2021), highlighting the need for context-specific strategies informed by comparative peacebuilding evidence.

## METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a mixed-methods research design, combining qualitative and quantitative approaches to comprehensively assess IGAD's role in South Sudan's peacebuilding process. The qualitative component employed in-depth interviews and document analysis of key peace agreements (CPA, RARCSS) to capture nuanced stakeholder perspectives, while the quantitative component utilised structured surveys to measure perceptions of IGAD's effectiveness across different groups. Data collection occurred between 2022-2023, incorporating triangulation through multiple methods to enhance validity (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The study targeted a population of 192 participants across five key stakeholder groups involved in South Sudan's peace process, comprising government/opposition representatives, IGAD officials, UNMISS personnel, civil society actors, and community members. Using recent sampling frameworks for conflict research (Cohen et al., 2018), a

statistically representative sample of 141 participants was selected. Purposive sampling was applied to institutional actors, ensuring inclusion of knowledgeable informants with direct peace process involvement, while simple random sampling selected community respondents to achieve geographic and ethnic balance across conflict-affected regions. Research instruments were rigorously developed, with questionnaires tested for reliability (Cronbach's  $\alpha \geq 0.79$ ) and validated through expert review (CVI=0.827) following contemporary peace research protocols (Pherali & Lewis, 2019). Pilot testing with 15 respondents outside the target population refined question clarity and cultural appropriateness for South Sudanese contexts.

Data was analysed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative data from surveys were processed using SPSS v.28, generating frequencies, descriptive statistics, and mean scores to identify trends (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2018). Qualitative data from interviews and peace agreements underwent thematic analysis (Nowell et al., 2017), with codes developed inductively and verified through peer debriefing. Emerging themes were contextualised using recent peacebuilding frameworks (Mac Ginty & Richmond, 2021).

Ethical compliance followed Cavendish University Uganda's research guidelines and contemporary conflict research standards (Mertens, 2020), emphasizing: informed consent obtained in writing, confidentiality protocols including anonymization of sensitive political responses; voluntary participation with right to withdraw at any stage; and beneficence through trauma sensitive interviewing techniques for conflict affected respondents (Jacobsen & Landau, 2021). Limitations, including potential response bias in conflict zones, were mitigated through methodological triangulation and member checking with key informants to verify interpretations (Bennett & Elman, 2020).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Demographic Information

The demographic characteristics of the study participants reflect a diverse cross-section of individuals affected by the prolonged conflict. In terms of gender, the majority were male (64.6%), with females comprising 35.4%, indicating that both male and female perspectives were represented in the study. Age-wise, respondents fell across a wide spectrum, with the largest group aged 42–49 years (33%), followed by those aged 50 and above (29.4%), suggesting that most participants were mature adults with lived experience of the conflict. The study also captured views from a variety of organizational backgrounds, with most respondents being community members (61.6%), alongside

participants from government agencies (18.7%), civil society (8.3%), the international community (6.8%), and IGAD (4.6%). Educationally, the majority held bachelor's degrees (42.1%), followed by diploma holders (25.6%), certificate holders (21.1%), and those with master's degrees (11.2%), indicating a generally literate population capable of engaging meaningfully with the study. Regarding occupation, participants included peasants (36%), the self-employed (25.6%), civil servants (18.8%), and international staff (19.6%), reflecting a wide range of socioeconomic backgrounds. This demographic composition enriched the study with multifaceted perspectives on the conflict and its impact.

### Effectiveness of IGAD Interventions in South Sudan Peace Processes

**Table 1: Showing the Role Played by the IGAD**

Statements	SD (%)	D (%)	DK (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	Mean	Std. Dev.
IGAD provides financial support to resolving the South Sudan Conflict	15	6.8	21.1	34.6	22.6	3.42	1.32
IGAD has played the role of a mediator well	1.5	6.8	13.5	49.6	28.6	3.96	0.91
IGAD has proposed a Win-Win Solution to the South Sudan Conflict	3	9.8	20.3	31.6	35.3	3.86	1.09
IGAD has provided peacekeeping operations in South Sudan	12	13.5	18.8	49.6	6	3.24	1.14
IGAD has employed collective security against the South Sudan conflict	14.3	18	21.8	39.1	6.8	3.06	1.19
IGAD has been able to balance the interests of different players in the South Sudan conflict	9.8	14.3	26.3	39.1	10.5	3.26	1.13
IGAD has been able to disarm the warring parties in South Sudan	51.1	6	14.3	24.8	3.8	2.24	1.39
IGAD has always taken sides in the South Sudan Conflict	7.5	33.1	16.5	34.6	8.3	3.03	1.14
IGAD provides humanitarian assistance to those affected by war	13.5	7.5	16.5	34.6	27.8	3.55	1.33
Average Mean						3.29	

**Source:** *Primary Data*

The findings in Table 1 demonstrate that IGAD has played a notable role in mediating the South Sudan conflict, with the highest mean scores reflecting agreement that it has facilitated negotiations (Mean = 3.96), proposed win-win solutions (Mean = 3.86), and offered humanitarian

support (Mean = 3.55). These strengths position IGAD as a key diplomatic actor.

Interview insights reinforced this view, with one participant noting that

*“IGAD has done well in bringing the two main parties to the table—without this, peace would remain elusive.”*

However, IGAD’s capacity for implementation and enforcement appears limited. Respondents were neutral about its role in peacekeeping (Mean = 3.24), collective security (Mean = 3.06), and balancing interests (Mean = 3.26). Most notably, there was strong disagreement on IGAD’s ability to disarm warring groups (Mean = 2.24).

As echoed in interviews, one respondent stressed, *“IGAD talks peace, but the guns remain in the hands of fighters.”* Concerns about partiality were also raised, with a modest mean of 3.03 regarding IGAD’s neutrality. The average mean of 3.29 points to a moderately effective role overall—highlighting IGAD’s success in diplomacy and

negotiation, but also exposing its institutional weaknesses in peace enforcement, disarmament, and operational neutrality.

The results suggest that IGAD has contributed significantly to the peace process through dialogue, compromise, and humanitarian assistance, but it lacks the enforcement capacity and authority to ensure a durable peace. Its efforts, while essential, remain constrained by limited resources, political complexity, and the absence of strong implementation mechanisms. For IGAD to play a transformative role, it will require greater institutional strength, political backing, and enforcement power to translate peace agreements into lasting stability.

### **Institutional Analysis of IGAD's Mandate and Structures**

**Table 2: Institutional Analysis of IGAD**

Statements	SD (%)	D (%)	DK (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	Mean	Std. Dev.
IGAD intervention is based on sound consultation initiatives	0.8	9	16.5	68.4	5.3	3.68	0.74
IGAD intervention makes use of wider stakeholder engagement	3	9	20.3	39.1	28.6	3.81	1.04
IGAD intervention initiatives have the potential to resolve the conflict	4.5	11.3	21.8	29.3	33.1	3.75	1.16
Warring parties are made to understand the implications of the war	4.5	18	17.3	52.6	7.5	3.4	1.01
Power sharing has been a proposal by IGAD in resolving the conflict	2.3	1.5	7.5	48.1	40.6	4.23	0.83
IGAD member states readily provide refugee assistance to victims of war	7.5	6	15.8	40.6	30.1	3.79	1.15
<b>Average Mean</b>						<b>3.77</b>	

**Source:** Primary data

The results in Table 2 indicate that IGAD’s peacebuilding approach is structured and consultative, with particularly high agreement that power-sharing is a key proposal used to resolve the conflict (Mean = 4.23). Respondents also agreed that IGAD uses wider stakeholder engagement (Mean = 3.81), conducts sound consultation (Mean = 3.68), and that its initiatives carry real potential to resolve the conflict (Mean = 3.75). Additionally, IGAD member states were acknowledged for providing refugee assistance (Mean = 3.79).

Interview participants confirmed these findings, with one respondent stating, *“IGAD has embraced an inclusive process, drawing in civil society, elders, and regional actors to support the peace agenda.”* This highlights IGAD’s effort to position itself as a collaborative peace actor within both continental and global frameworks.

Another interviewee emphasised, *“Power sharing is the only way the guns can fall silent; even if it is not perfect, it offers a temporary solution that can open the way for long-term reforms.”* This



reinforces the strong endorsement of power-sharing as IGAD's central peacebuilding tool.

However, the relatively lower mean score on whether warring parties are made to understand the implications of war (Mean = 3.40) reveals a critical gap in IGAD's peacebuilding framework, specifically around conflict sensitisation and civic education. While political agreements are brokered, the absence of broader awareness-raising may hinder meaningful reconciliation and long-term peace.

As one civil society actor said, *"Peace talks and settlements are good, but the people carrying guns need to be educated on why peace matters, not just what they're getting from it."* This points to a missed opportunity for IGAD to strengthen its peacebuilding mandate through targeted messaging and social transformation.

These findings suggest that IGAD has developed a reliable institutional framework for peacebuilding, characterised by consultation, stakeholder inclusion, and power-sharing mechanisms. Its structure aligns with broader continental and global peacebuilding norms, particularly in areas like mediation and humanitarian response. However, IGAD's approach is still limited in scope, especially in educating and transforming the mindset of warring parties, which is essential for sustainable peace. Strengthening this component could enhance the effectiveness of its overall strategy and help shift peacebuilding from elite-level agreements to community-driven reconciliation and accountability.

### Strategies and Challenges in IGAD's Peacebuilding Approach

**Table 3: Assessing the Strategies of IGAD's Intervention**

Statements	SD (%)	D (%)	DK (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	Mean	Std. Dev.
The ARCSS was not fair to all parties	25.6	11.3	10.5	40.6	12	3.02	1.42
The ARCSS was violated by all warring parties	3.8	9	3.8	27.8	55.6	4.22	1.11
The ARCSS lacked consultation with stakeholders	25.6	13.5	12	41.4	7.5	2.91	1.37
The ARCSS didn't include proper peace-sharing initiatives	4.5	28.6	14.3	39.8	12.8	3.27	1.14
The ARCSS had technical loopholes	0	3	12	36.1	48.9	4.3	0.79
The ARCSS lacked enforcement mechanisms	0.8	3	8.3	43.6	44.4	4.27	0.8
Average Mean						3.66	

**Source:** Primary data

The results in Table 3 highlight serious weaknesses in the implementation of the 2015 Compromise Peace Agreement. Respondents strongly agreed that the agreement was violated by all parties (Mean = 4.22), lacked enforcement mechanisms (Mean = 4.27), and contained technical loopholes (Mean = 4.30). These flaws severely undercut the credibility and sustainability of the agreement as a peacebuilding tool.

One interviewee remarked, *"The agreement is being implemented partly well and partly poorly;*

*it's respected only when it suits one side."* This suggests that IGAD's peace strategy lacked binding authority and neutral oversight. Furthermore, respondents were less certain or critical of the consultation process (Mean = 2.91) and the inclusiveness of peace-sharing initiatives (Mean = 3.27), indicating doubts about the agreement's legitimacy and fairness.

Another informant shared, *"Many stakeholders were sidelined in the talks. Some decisions felt top-down rather than inclusive."* This reveals that even well-intentioned strategies like the RARCSS

may struggle without broad-based ownership and transparent processes.

The findings suggest that while IGAD's adoption of the R-ARCSS was a bold step toward peace, its implementation was marred by violations, weak enforcement, technical gaps, and limited stakeholder engagement. These shortcomings undermined its ability to de-escalate conflict and

build sustainable peace. Moving forward, IGAD must strengthen accountability systems, improve consultation mechanisms, and ensure implementation frameworks are robust and enforceable.

### **This Section Addresses the Challenges IGAD Faces in Resolving the South Sudan Conflict**

**Table 4: Showing IGAD Challenges**

<b>Statements</b>	<b>SD (%)</b>	<b>D (%)</b>	<b>DK (%)</b>	<b>A (%)</b>	<b>SA (%)</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>
IGAD intervention is limited by funding	5.3	0.8	12.8	33.8	47.4	4.17	1.04
Conflicts of interest among IGAD member states	2.3	1.5	10.5	36.8	48.9	4.28	0.88
International interference limits IGAD's role	8.3	3.8	12	39.8	36.1	3.91	1.17
Limited combat personnel	5.3	6	22.6	57.9	8.3	3.57	0.92
Fierce tribal clashes reduce IGAD's capacity	0.8	5.3	12.8	34.6	46.6	4.21	0.91
Border security threats affect IGAD efforts	4.5	4.5	15.8	38.3	36.8	3.98	1.05
Warring parties fail to harmonize power-sharing	2.3	2.3	13.5	35.3	46.6	4.21	0.92
Uncontrollable armed generals disrupt peace	4.5	2.3	5.3	37.6	50.4	4.27	0.99
Average Mean						4.07	

**Source:** Primary data

The results in Table 4 point to a wide range of systemic, structural, and political obstacles undermining IGAD's peacebuilding efforts in South Sudan. Respondents strongly agreed that challenges such as conflicting interests among IGAD member states (Mean = 4.28), uncontrollable armed groups (Mean = 4.27), tribal clashes, and lack of funding (Mean = 4.17) significantly limit IGAD's ability to act effectively.

As one key informant noted, *"Some IGAD member states are not neutral; some back Kiir, others support Machar. That alone fractures the whole peace initiative."* Another respondent shared, *"Funding is a real bottleneck. IGAD cannot act decisively if its member states don't support its operations financially."* These comments reflect how internal disunity and

external constraints weaken IGAD's leverage and response capacity.

Moderately high agreement was also recorded for challenges such as international interference (Mean = 3.91) and inadequate security personnel (Mean = 3.57), highlighting how external actors and operational limitations further complicate IGAD's intervention.

The findings indicate that IGAD operates in an extremely volatile and politically fragmented environment. Its intervention is significantly constrained by conflicting loyalties among member states, funding limitations, decentralised armed actors, and unresolved ethnic tensions. These factors interact to reduce IGAD's coherence, credibility, and capacity to deliver sustainable peace. For IGAD to be more effective, it must work towards greater institutional

neutrality, improved coordination, sufficient resourcing, and stronger regional consensus.

## DISCUSSION

This section interprets the study's findings in relation to the three research objectives. The discussion provides a critical reflection on the effectiveness of IGAD's interventions, its institutional mandate and structure, and the peacebuilding strategies and challenges it faces in South Sudan. The discussion also integrates relevant literature to support and enrich the interpretation of the findings.

### Effectiveness of IGAD Interventions in South Sudan Peace Processes

The findings indicate that IGAD has made commendable contributions in areas such as mediation, proposing win-win solutions, financial support, and humanitarian assistance. These roles are widely acknowledged as central to any peacebuilding process, particularly in fragile post-conflict contexts like South Sudan. The emphasis on humanitarian assistance resonates with Stigant (2013), who observed IGAD's role in strengthening the national capacities of South Sudanese actors to manage their own security. This support is especially critical given the mass displacement and humanitarian crisis caused by the conflict.

However, IGAD's contributions in areas such as peacekeeping operations, collective security enforcement, and disarmament were reported as weak or unclear. The organisation's failure to disarm warring parties, in particular, suggests a serious gap in operational capacity. Without meaningful enforcement tools, warring groups remain armed and active, thereby sustaining the cycle of violence. The findings also suggest that IGAD appears to take sides, potentially undermining its role as a neutral mediator. When a peace mediator is perceived as biased, its legitimacy is eroded, and trust among conflicting parties diminishes, compromising the entire negotiation process.

Kimani (2012) underscores that while IGAD has been instrumental in integrating South Sudan into

regional peace efforts, the body has often lacked the teeth to enforce decisions or remain impartial. This highlights a recurring issue with regional peacebuilding mechanisms: they often “bark but do not bite.” As a result, IGAD's interventions, although strategic in design, remain limited in impact. The study thus identifies a critical gap between policy intentions and enforcement capacity in IGAD's peace efforts.

### Institutional Analysis of IGAD's Mandate and Structures

IGAD's peacebuilding architecture was found to be grounded in consultative processes, power-sharing negotiations, and stakeholder engagement. The strong endorsement of IGAD's power-sharing strategy, as evidenced in the transitional government arrangement between President Salva Kiir and Dr. Riek Machar, demonstrates the organisation's commitment to providing practical conflict resolution frameworks. This aligns with findings by FOI (2016), which highlighted IGAD's evolving capacity to initiate regional peace processes through diplomatic platforms and consensus-building efforts.

Nevertheless, the study identified significant institutional limitations. A critical gap is IGAD's failure to adequately educate or sensitise warring parties about the long-term consequences of the conflict. This lack of awareness perpetuates short-termism and self-interest among key actors. As Bertram (1995) notes, peacebuilding involves more than structural agreements—it requires the transformation of individual and group attitudes shaped by years of confrontation and trauma. The absence of such transformational work means that the deeper psychological and social roots of the conflict remain unresolved.

Furthermore, the findings imply that stakeholder consultations were often incomplete or superficial, excluding key factions and interest groups from the peace process. This not only dilutes the legitimacy of agreements but also makes them vulnerable to future violations. Thus, while IGAD's mandate appears aligned with continental norms of subsidiarity and preventive

diplomacy, its institutional depth and outreach remain insufficient to address the complexities of South Sudan's conflict landscape.

### **Strategies and Challenges in IGAD's Peacebuilding Approach**

Regarding the strategies employed by IGAD, the study critically assessed the 2015 Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (ARCSS), identifying key structural and procedural weaknesses. These include technical loopholes, a lack of enforcement mechanisms, and limited consultation with all stakeholders. The agreement's violation by all major parties further exposes its fragility and the inadequacy of follow-up mechanisms. This confirms Brosché and Höglund's (2016) position that peace agreements lacking in inclusiveness and enforcement are likely to be undermined by the same actors they intend to pacify.

Moreover, the study found that the ARCSS failed to reflect the interests of all factions, possibly focusing too heavily on the power-sharing arrangement between the government and the SPLM-IO while neglecting other militia groups. Such exclusion undermines the integrity of the peace process and creates incentives for spoiler behaviour.

The findings also shed light on numerous challenges faced by IGAD, including limited funding, conflicts of interest among member states, tribal divisions, proliferation of armed groups, and international interference. These constraints are consistent with FOI (2016), which reported that IGAD's ambitions were expanding faster than its institutional capacity, and that fundraising often overshadowed the implementation of existing programmes.

Of particular concern is the divergent interests among IGAD member states, which have created paralysis in decision-making and weakened collective commitment to peace enforcement. Ndunge (2014) emphasized that regional actors like Uganda and Sudan, whose national interests are deeply tied to South Sudan, complicate IGAD's ability to act as a unified mediator.

Similarly, the failure to harmonise tribal and factional power-sharing ambitions has created persistent fractures that regional diplomacy alone cannot easily resolve.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, while IGAD's intervention in the South Sudan peace process has demonstrated commitment through diplomatic engagement, mediation, and humanitarian support, the effectiveness of its efforts remains constrained by structural, political, and operational limitations. The institutional analysis revealed gaps in enforcement mechanisms, stakeholder engagement, and peace education, which have undermined the long-term sustainability of peace agreements. Similarly, the implementation of the 2015 Peace Agreement suffered due to a lack of inclusivity, technical flaws, and the absence of credible enforcement systems. Challenges such as internal conflicts of interest among member states, limited resources, and ethnic polarisation continue to weaken IGAD's peacebuilding approach. These findings underscore the urgent need for structural reforms, enhanced coordination, and context-sensitive strategies that prioritise neutrality, stakeholder inclusion, and institutional capacity to sustain peace in South Sudan and across the region.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the study's findings, thematic analysis, and identified gaps, the following recommendations are proposed to improve IGAD's peacebuilding efforts in South Sudan. IGAD should move beyond traditional diplomacy by establishing a credible peacekeeping and collective security mechanism, with full commitment from member states to deploy personnel and resources in conflict zones. This should be supported by the creation of a disarmament and sanctions framework with the authority to disarm non-compliant factions and impose penalties such as diplomatic isolation and targeted sanctions. IGAD must also expand its peace dialogues to include marginalised militia



factions, wider civil society, and regional partners by adopting a comprehensive stakeholder mapping approach. To restore trust and legitimacy, IGAD should affirm its neutrality, strengthen transparency in its processes, and address internal political interests that compromise its impartiality.

Operationally, IGAD should establish a permanent and independent monitoring and evaluation body beyond temporary structures like the RJMEC. This will facilitate the preservation of institutional memory, cross-country learning, and timely assessment of interventions. IGAD should also launch wide-reaching civic education and sensitization initiatives to raise awareness among stakeholders about the long-term consequences of war and the benefits of peaceful resolution. Future peace agreements should incorporate clear enforcement mechanisms, including sanctions for violations, a standing oversight body, and channels for reporting and addressing breaches. To enhance credibility and effectiveness, IGAD should introduce an internal review mechanism to periodically evaluate the alignment of its peacebuilding efforts with its mandate and values.

To reduce internal conflicts of interest among member states, IGAD should enforce a binding code of conduct and consider appointing neutral facilitators when national interests threaten impartiality. IGAD must also support comprehensive disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration programs, with international collaboration, to help ex-combatants transition into civilian life and reduce militia resurgence. Addressing deep-seated tribal divisions requires IGAD to promote inclusive governance, ethnic reconciliation, and fair resource distribution through representative power-sharing models and equitable public appointments. At the community level, IGAD should invest in local peace infrastructures such as youth dialogue platforms, women-led mediation spaces, and grassroots peace committees to embed reconciliation at the societal level. Lastly, sustainable peace requires reliable funding; IGAD should diversify its financial sources by partnering with regional

bodies, international donors, the diaspora, and the private sector through a dedicated Peacebuilding Trust Fund to ensure stable and long-term support for its interventions.

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