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In what a top Sudan based UN Official describes as a “big step forward”, a deal was signed between President Salva Kiir with his principal rival Riek Machar alongside members of other opposition factions. The step which aims to end the five-year-long conflict in the region was greeted with jubilations in the South Sudan capital.

The Head of the UN Mission in South Sudan - David Shearer, explained with regard to the issue of future governance, that Kiir will be retaining his position as President, while Machar along with four others shall have their names put forward for the vice-presidency.

The issues that still require addressing in terms of the deal, is largely to do with security matters. This ranges from how local law enforcement is going to be organized, how the national army is going to be reformed and how the various militant groups will be all consolidated under one umbrella. As per Shearer, a variety of other issues still require attention such as infrastructural development, public policy and economic development.

Formed just seven years ago, South Sudan is the youngest nation in the world. However, the conflict that has been going on since December 2013 has taken a severe toll on the country. Thousands have lost their lives, about 4 million residents displaced with 2 million of the displaced seeking havens in neighbouring countries.

Previous efforts at peace-talks were headed by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), a local East African body which was not successful in negotiating a deal between the warring factions. However, the intervention of the UN not only has provided a safe haven for fleeing residents but also restored law and order locally. The silver lining of what might have seemed a risky intervention is the fact that today it has helped in securing a deal between the parties, with scope for future peace and development.

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