



TRAMPLED GRASS

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"When two elephants fight, it's the grass that gets trampled."

—African Proverb

This collection of stories is not about the *two elephants* that have destroyed our adopted country of [South Sudan](#). We'll leave that to the political experts. As we say back [home](#), I don't have a dog (or [elephant](#)) in this fight.

My concern, as well as stories, is about *the trampled grass*: the innocent everyday citizens of South Sudan.

*"This war took away something we must have: our opportunity at [education](#)." —
Ulua Camp School Boys*



They are personally paying the price for the civil war that has gripped South Sudan since mid-December 2013.

We've met these brave people in the refugee camps and settlements along the border of South Sudan and its neighbor, Uganda. These are their stories.

The history and background of the current situation is complex and long. Here's how it's playing out presently:

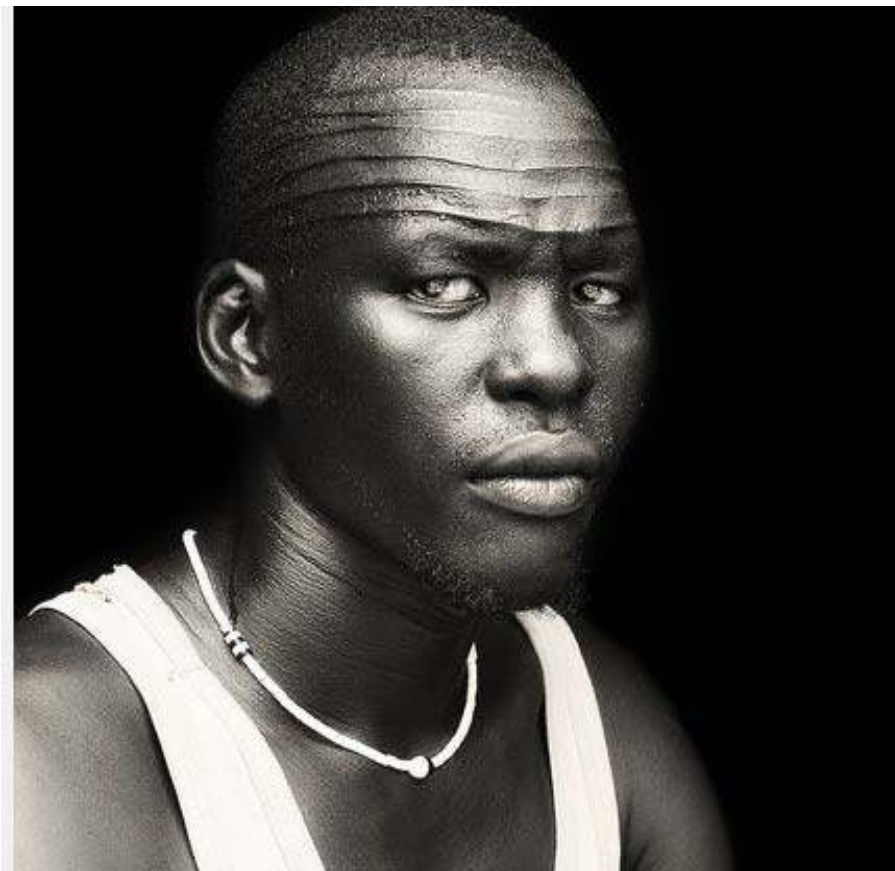
A power struggle exists between the two strongest men in South Sudan, President Salva Kiir and former Vice President Riek Machar. Their sharing of power broke in July 2013 when President Kiir fired his entire cabinet, including Machar.

Kiir is from the Dinka tribe, South Sudan's largest tribe.

Machar is from its second largest, the Nuer.

The cultural facial markings of the Dinka and Nuer distinguish the tribes

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[Learn more \(http://groundreport.com/south-sudan-our-cultural-marks-are-killings-us/\)](http://groundreport.com/south-sudan-our-cultural-marks-are-killings-us/) about the two tribes and how these facial markings have

played a part in the violence.

The fighting is not all about ethnic allegiance, but the people you'll meet in the following stories—Nuer, Dinka, Shilluk, or Zande— were trampled by soldiers, rebels, even neighbors who viewed them as the enemy.

Many lost family members.

Map of South Sudan and its neighbors.



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Many fled south to the Ugandan border. That's where we met them in the refugee camps and villages.

They are the trampled grass.

These are their stories and of the heroes who've reached out to them.

Heroes: Once refugees, Joseph and Jessica Anyovi, have used their past experiences to help others.



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