



South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC), P. O BOX 209 Juba, South Sudan

Nairobi, 19th July 2018

PEACE NOW!

STATEMENT BY THE HEADS OF CHURCHES OF SOUTH SUDAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES (SSCC)

"I am for peace, but when I speak, they are for war." (Psalms 120: 7).

We, the Heads of Churches of the South Sudan Council Churches (SSCC), met in Nairobi, Kenya on July 17-19, 2018, to pray, listen to the voice God and reflect on the recent developments in our country.

We as the Shepherds of the People of South Sudan continue to mourn and grieve for our country. Our hearts pain for the suffering, tired, hungry flock and for our leaders with all their fears, anger and trauma as they struggle both across our nation, the region and the world. The winds of violence and conflict have continued to obscure our road to light and peace, while the international community remains discouraged and frustrated by the absence of peace.

We have taken note of recent developments in which IGAD has mandated the countries of the region to support the peace process that has resulted in the signing of permanent ceasefire agreement known as the Khartoum Agreement in June 2018, and the Entebbe peace proposal on Power sharing. We thank and commend our good neighbours for these vital initiatives of peacemaking in our country. But we still express strong and serious concerns over untimely emphasis on the technical aspects of the agreement before trust has even been built between the parties. The parties themselves have acknowledged that the entire implementation of the agreement will be dependant on how trust can be built both now and in the long term.

On this note, we thank the IGAD Special Envoy to South Sudan Dr. Ismail WAIS, for his courageous and exemplary role in heeding the call of the parties during High Level Revitalization Forum in Addis Ababa to invite the CHURCH to facilitate them in closed-door healing and dialogue, and encourage genuine deliberation to narrow the gaps in their hearts.

It is well known that the CHURCH has historically played a key moral and spiritual role in healing and mediation at various points in our history to stop bloodshed and make peace. The approach of truth telling or 'vomiting out the truth' is a necessity to bringing people together again. While the efforts of the Church this year in May did not significantly narrow the technical gaps on security and governance, yet the parties met face-to-face for the first time in several years. The parties have expressed willingness for the CHURCH to facilitate space for genuine dialogue.

Despite the many efforts of the region and international community, the tragic dimensions of the problems of South Sudan need an immediate and lasting cessation of hostilities and nothing less! This senseless war has increased the suffering in the country, frustrated development and the fulfillment of justice on which true peace depends.

Peace is the call from the hearts of all the people of South Sudan. We are tired of war, violent conflicts of interest and we are urgently calling for all communities of South Sudan to shun tribalism, and all kinds of fragmentation that inhibit from attaining true nationalism, durable unity and working together for comprehensive peace and genuine reconciliation. Our people in the IDP camps, the Protection of Civilian sites, the refugee camps and in the diaspora need to engage one another, embrace the possibility of peace and walk the long journey towards healing, peace and prosperity in our beloved land.

We, the Heads of Churches of South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC), have been present to our people in the refugee camps and the Protection of Civilian sites to encourage them to remain faithful and hopeful; we have sought

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to meet our leaders and encourage them through prayer into dialogue. We have facilitated and mediated within neutral forums and community conversations. We have spoken out for peace and justice, we have called for our leaders to be accountable and we pledge to work continually for peace in our country, encouraging all of our people to hold on to faith and hope, trusting wholeheartedly that peace will return to our country sooner rather than later. We believe and therefore we speak!

Without genuine dialogue, healing and substantial trust building amongst the Parties, the political will needed for the successful implementation of a peace agreement will be lacking, and will void all efforts. The CHURCH reiterates to all stakeholders that peace is not an event, nor a document, but a process requiring commitment and sacrifice. Since the war began in December 2013, several agreements have been signed but never fully implemented, and as a result our country remains in despair. The people of South Sudan will no longer accept false promises.

We resolved to stand, and work together for peace through the South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC) Action Plan for Peace (APP). We continue to express our prophetic voice, as we listen and are guided by the Holy Spirit. We reach out to all the Leaders without seeking popularity or favor, acting to remind them of their duties to protect life. We seek to pursue a vision that will bring our people out of the desert of this violence to an oasis of peace where all the fragmented people of South Sudan will seek a vibrant and cohesive nation that is ONE PEOPLE, ONE NATION and ONE SOUTH SUDAN.

OH GOD BLESS SOUTH SUDAN

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Chairman, South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC), JUBA.

The Most Rev. Justin BADI ARAMA
Primate of Episcopal Church of South Sudan (ECSS)
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Bishop Dr. Arkanjelo WANI LEMI JEBERI
Presiding Bishop, Africa Inland Church (AIC).

Bishop Dr. Isaiah MAJOK DAU
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