



SOUTH SUDAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES (SSCC)

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER 2021

FOURTH EDITION

FOREWORD



I salute you, my brothers and sisters, in the almighty name of our savior Jesus Christ as we come to the end of 2021. I want to congratulate you for passing through the test and trials of 2021 and for consistently keeping your spirits high; I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Almighty Father for the protection he had for us this year despite its challenges. 2021 like the recent years, has had its challenging events that happened in between. South Sudan suffers from various natural disasters such as droughts, flash flooding, locust invasion, internal conflicts, and the pandemic exacerbates already existing vulnerabilities and results in short-term and long-term implications for economic growth.

Due to the natural disasters and the strain of the economy due to the measures taken to contain the spread of Covid-19 (Social distancing and restrictions on movement and business operating hours); it is facing its worst-ever hunger crisis, the number of people in danger of starvation has risen compared to any other year. An estimated 1.4 million children are already suffering from acute malnutrition, and about 2.47 million people are at emergency levels of food insecurity. About 31,000 people face catastrophic levels of food insecurity or famine-like conditions.

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And to curb all these: the government of South Sudan is to fast track the implementation of the Peace deal to address some of the causes of the hunger crisis, internal conflicts, domestic violence, including rape, insecurities, murder cases mainly affecting women and girls in conflict zones/communities, revenge killing, child abductions, etc. The signing of the R-ARCSS in September 2018 was a turning point in South Sudan's Peace process. It provided a glimmer of hope to the people of South Sudan who have had to endure years of suffering and bloodshed. Unfortunately, the lack of prioritization and political will on the South Sudanese elite has imperiled the Peace Process. A few accomplishments were made in implementing the R-ARCSS relating to governance issues while stressing the stalled implementation of the permanent ceasefire and transitional security arrangements, though so much remains to be done by the RTGoNU considering the remaining Transitional Period as it was previously agreed upon.

This year, the South Sudan Council of Churches has worked tirelessly to accomplish the resolutions penned down for this year and improvise where needed. They recently mediated the Tombura situation—bringing in both tribes and understanding what is going on, and going to the ground, conducting multiple consultative meetings in mediation to calm down threats. Two colorful and successful commemorations:— International Youth Day and International Day of Peace, Trauma Healing Trainings in all the regions, 30+ Radio Talk shows on Peace Building combined with the 16 Days of Activism. To contain Covid-19, SSCC continued (and will continue) working with the South Sudan Ministry of Health and World Health Organization in creating awareness on the COVID-19 vaccine.

As we (SSCC) continue the quest for Peace, Healing, Forgiveness, Justice, and Reconciliation in South Sudan, I and SSCC Staff would like to take this opportunity to enormously appreciate the generous and continuous support from our Global Ecumenical partners and the International Community. We look forward to working together again next year and beyond until our calling has come to pass. And to the SSCC Staff, thank you for being SSCC, not just you. You have shown the world that South Sudan can do better through your work, even in challenging situations. Thank you for taking it all in and never giving up.

To my fellow South Sudanese friends, supporters, and people in Christ worldwide, both South Sudan and Non-South Sudanese, I would like to encourage you to remain resilient and optimistic for 2022. Your unheard voice is always heard through Christ, your unseen tears are always seen, and God is weeping them for you. Let peace begin with you and peace with coming to South Sudan. Thank you for raising your voices for peace.

A happy holiday and blessed new year filled with joy and contentment.

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INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY 2021

In 1999, the United Nations General Assembly, in its resolution 54/120, endorsed the recommendation made by the World Conference of Ministers of Youth (Lisbon, 8-12 August 1998) that 12th August be declared International Youth Day. Since then, the day has been globally commemorated to give the opportunity to celebrate and mainstream the youth voices, actions, and initiatives, as well as their meaningful, universal, and equitable engagement.

In a colorful and small celebration, the South Sudan Council of Churches, in partnership with Finn Church Aid and Triumphant Development organization, joined the rest of the world to mark the day at Nyakuron Cultural Center in Juba.

Among the attendants was the Minister of Youth and Sports, Hon. Albino Bol Dhieu constantly reminded the youths of their active role in Peacebuilding. He further encouraged the youth to shun off from being incited in waggung war in the Country.

“let us preach peace to the young people, and we can not afford to go back to war again. For me, my only message to the young people is that we have been used as tools of destruction, but the time has come for us to use our own energy to become tools of construction. This is the time. Those beating the drum of war, if we say no to them, they will not get forces to go and fight ...” Hon. Albino Bol Dhieu, The National Minister of Youth & Sports in South Sudan. Participants during the International Youth Day take a group photo with Partners and dignitaries during the commemoration of the day.

According to the 2008 Census that was conducted by the government of the Republic of South Sudan and supported by the United Population Fund (UNFPA), the youth cover a population of 73.7% in South Sudan; however, at all levels, deep inequalities and a lack of political and social inclusion and representation appear to be at the core of Youth in South Sudan.

South Sudanese youth have continuously stated that their voices are not sufficiently considered, less presented, their needs sufficiently understood and met, and that their engagement and empowerment in various processes remain a Big Challenge.

In his remarks, the Country Director of Finn Church Aid, Berhanu Haile acknowledged the crucial involvement of youth innovation in enhancing climate mitigation and environmental policies. He further encouraged the involvement of youth in social and economic transformation.

The global theme of this year's celebration was “Transforming food systems: Youth Innovation for Human and Planetary Health.” Meanwhile, the South Sudan Council of Churches theme was “South Sudan youth for sustainable peace and development.” With a slogan “Youth for Peace.”

Photo: Youth Attending the Interdational Youth Day Celebration at Nyakkuron Cultural Center



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GENDER MAINSTREAMING TRAINING.

South Sudan Council of Churches in partnership with Norwegian Church Aid (NCA), conducted a Gender Mainstreaming training between the 23rd to 27th in August 2021 and 15th to 20th in Sept 2021 targeting about 64 participants that included 21 male and 43 female across members of the Youths, ICCs, Women Link, stakeholders' peace partners, and civil society organizations in Upper Nile (Malakal) and Bhar El Gazel (Wau).

The training impacted participants with knowledge and skills in the integration of gender Justice-gender mainstreaming approaches in peacebuilding and conflict transformation, enhanced participant's understanding of the effects of GBV, mobilized a collective and strong effort to campaign against GBV especially in critical times of conflict and cemented the integration of gender mainstreaming in the SSCC APP strategy and ensured religious leaders and women actively participate in activities aimed at inculcating and building peace and reconciliation in their communities.

The training also boosted ICC leaders with knowledge and skills on UNSCR 1325 on gender equality promotion and enabled the youths and women to develop an action plan, empowering them to become agents and ambassadors of peace in their respective locations.



Pictorial from the training in Malakal and Wau.

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MONTHLY PRAYERS AND FASTING FOR PEACE, FORGIVENESS AND RECONCILIATION.



Pictorial of Women of faith during the monthly prayers and fasting Day in Juba. Photo Credit. Viola

After the 2013 crisis, the women of faith initiated a monthly prayer and fasting to God for his intervention, the South Sudanese Women of faith believe that by praying and fasting the stability and insecurities will come to an end. However, due to the pandemic the religious women halt back from the procession that was to happen in the three states.

On the 16th of Oct 2021, the Women of faith conducted their first even monthly prayer and fasting bringing in all the tribes of from the three states under the theme. "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and Courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go" Joshua 1:9. This long initiative not only focused or encouraged an environment of peace, forgiveness and reconciliation but also aimed at enhancing the ecumenical fellowship and relationship within the community of the faithful SSCC member churches, its affiliates, and other Christian denominations within the regions and it has strengthened the coexistence of the members churches.

Much as, the permanent cease fire continues to hold out, there has been sporadic tribal conflicts across the region, abduction and killings of civilians, youth harassment of humanitarian workers hence, prompting the continuity of prayers and fasting in the entire country.

The monthly prayer and fasting has created a forum for these women to share their experiences, harness the spirit of reconciliation and forgiveness amongst the ethnic tribes of the Equatoria region. The faithful as well believe that through the prayers and fasting, the narrative and the context of conflicts would change to peaceful environment, co-existence of the ethnic tribes, reconciliation, forgiveness, healing, and restoration of the health relationships.

Furthermore, collectively, and together as women of faith they asked The South Sudan Council of Churches to request government authorities to approval the street prayer rallies.

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COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE MEETING IN LIRIA.



Pictorials:

Top Left - Participants during Community Conversation in Liria during the Opening Ceremony with the Account Controller Mr. Sisto. Liria Payam, Juba County.

Top Right - Youth group during community consultative meeting.

Bottom - Women groups during community conversation.

South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC) facilitated a two-day community consultative meeting in Liria Payam targeting local government officials, traditional chiefs, youths, teachers, health workers, women, business representatives, and CBOs to find solutions and to initiate a peace process aimed at breaking the cycle of the ongoing inter-communal violence and road attacks, identify the key drivers of the child abductions and the frequent road ambushes.

Liria Payam is one of the most volatile and conflict-prone areas in Central Equatoria State, despite the area experiencing chronic food insecurity, lack of basic services, poor infrastructures, and a huge economic problem, there are also endemics that come in time to time like child abductions, land disputes, cattle rustling, revenge killing, banditry, armed road robberies, and ambushes.

During the training, the six community groups (chiefs, youths, health workers, women, business representatives, and the church leaders) reconciliatorily shared their experiences, pains, and grievances towards forgiveness and reconciliation with the first step from the church leaders on mediation and facilitation of discussions towards healing, reconciliation and re-building the shattered social fabric experienced by the conflict-affected communities.

On the other hand, the government officials acknowledged and called for collective efforts in peace-building, reconciliation, and development of infrastructures mainly pointing out a road network construction connecting the town of Liria to Juba and Torit, as well support on the establishment of local courts and a need to conduct compressive disarmament of the armed population in the areas. The government officials also called upon UN agencies and International NGOs to strengthen the capacity of local NGOs to support communities displaced by the flood and natural calamities.

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SANT' EGIDIO COMMUNITY UPDATES ON THE ROMA INITIATIVE



*Random Photos from the three days Workshop. Photo
Credit: Kiden Viola Lubang*

SSCC is Partnership with the community of Sant' Egidio in a three-day workshop updated church leaders, advocacy Taskforce (SSCC), Core Partners and Civil Society, Women leaders, and the Women link of South Sudan Council of Churches about the process of Roman Initiative and the community of Sant' Egidio.

Sant' Egidio is a Christian community born in 1968, right after the Second Vatican Council. An initiative of Andrea Riccardo, it was born in a secondary school in the Centre of Rome. Over the years, it has become a network of communities in more than 70 countries of the world. The community pays attention to the periphery and peripheral people, gathering men and women of all ages and conditions, united by a fraternal tie through the listening of the Gospel and the voluntary and free commitment for the poor and peace. Under the auspices of the Community of Sant' Egidio in Rome, and witnessed by IGAD, the government of South Sudan, the South Sudan Opposition Movements Alliance (SSOMA), The SPLM/A-IO, and National Democratic Movement (NDM) has signed a peace declaration in which they recommit to the Secession of Hostilities Agreement of December 2017 to avoid confrontation between the signatories and non-signatories parties of South Sudan peace agreement. This process has been ongoing since January 2020, and this initiative is for inclusivity of the peace process through the facilitation of dialogue between R-TGoNU and SSOMA.

This three-day workshop created a space for participants to brainstorm and intersect their work with the Rome Initiative, as well as provide recommendations on how the Rome peace process can be successful and inclusive.

During the training, participants shared their thoughts about the peace processes others recommended the South Sudan Council of Churches for bringing and partnering with the community of Sant' Egidio,

Hon. Agnes Lukudu, the former governor of Equatoria Region, mentioned that inclusivity is important; she also stated that when someone is left behind, the peace is not sustainable. She appreciated the actions of the pope when he kissed the feet of political leaders. I quoted, "He was exhibiting servant leadership, and it was hoped that the leaders of South Sudan would do the same."

The workshop that was blessed with prayers combining the ecumenical community of SSCC in Juba led by Bishop Isaiah Dau, preached the need to forgive and let go of hatred and revenge from our hearts.

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INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE 2021

In 1981, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) recognized the third Tuesday of September as World Peace Day. It was the opening day of the regular sessions of the General Assembly. Later in 2001, it announced 21 September as International Day of Peace. Also known as World Peace Day, the occasion aims to strengthen peace across nations by observing 24 hours of non-violence and ceasefire.

South Sudan Council of Churches in partnership with KAIROS Canada and Finn Church Aid (FCA) conducted an event to commemorate International Day of Peace. The event was held on 21st September 2021 at Juba Christian Centre (JCC), Juba, South Sudan.

Observed and celebrated across the world the International Day of Peace is a day to completely devote to promoting global solidarity for building a peaceful and sustainable world. Apart from living in harmony, the day seeks to remind people and nations to think about the importance of universal peace.

Due to the continuous Civil War that started in 2013, the International Day of Peace is a constant reminder for South Sudan to focus on peacebuilding as the communal violence, armed conflict, and sexual gender-based violence are still of existence, this did not only destabilize the peace but also increased food insecurity and retarded our socio-economic development in the country.

Deriving from the global theme ("Recovering Better for an equitable and sustainable world"), the South Sudan Council of Churches adopted a biblical theme "Make efforts to keep yourselves together with peace" This theme is a gesture for South Sudanese to strive for unity as it is a month the remedies for building peace.

This event was graced by 146 participants (60 females and 86 males) from the church, youth peace committee, women peace committee, government, and development partners including key figures like Bishop Isaiah Dau, Hon. Gerald Francis State minister of Peace Building, CES. Rev. James Lagos Alexander, Her Excellency, Jenny Hill, the Canadian Ambassador to South Sudan, etc.

"Whether or not you are a direct actor, you will be affected by war," said the Chairperson, Youth Peace Committee, Nelson Mandel, he urged Youths to change this narrative by changing their mindset and can advocate for peace. He added that it is the responsibility of the youth to work for peace.

Her Excellency, Jenny Hill, the Canadian Ambassador to South Sudan, expressed her delight to be part of the event. In her remarks, she called for accelerating the implementation of the peace agreement, saying people have hopes and dreams, this should be an opportunity to unite for a common goal. She further commended the youth for the work they are doing and encouraged them to keep up with their positive work towards Peace and urged for the inclusion of women in the peace processes.

In his remarks, Bishop Isaiah stated that peace should be modeled by the church leaders through the way they relate, conduct themselves and talk to each other. He added that when peace is planted in the heart, it blooms in the outside as well. Bishop Isaiah also mentioned that South Sudan is more than what is seen and there are beautiful things that we should focus on in South Sudan. He concluded with a prayer for peace in South Sudan.

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South Sudan Council of Churches
Head Office
P.O. Box 209 - Juba, South Sudan.



Thursday 18th November 2021

SOUTH SUDAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES STATEMENT REGARDING THE DECISION BY THE SWEDISH PROSECUTION AUTHORITY TO BRING CHARGES AGAINST OIL COMPANY LUNDIN ENERGY FOR AIDING AND ABETTING WAR CRIMES COMMITTED IN SOUTH SUDAN

"Learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, and please the widow's cause," (Isaiah 1:17). Because "He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:8).

South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC) respectful of the decision by the Swedish authorities to bring charges against Oil Company Lundin energy for aiding and abetting war crimes committed in South Sudan. There is no peace without justice, no reconciliation outside the truth, no forgiveness without repentance. Many grave crimes have been committed against our people in South Sudan and peace remains elusive without justice, truth and repentance. It is encouraging to know that the Swedish authorities have decided to hold the oil company Lundin Energy to account for its role during the civil war. The CHURCH stood and will always stand with the victims of oil exploitation twenty years ago and they still do today. Victims of abuses in villages and homes around the oil fields have the right to access to remedy and reparation. We hold the Swedish court system in high esteem and trust its wisdom. We pray that the trial will help to heal the wounds of our brothers and sisters in Unity State and pave the road for forgiveness and reconciliation.

SIGNED:

Rt. Rev. Moderator James PAR TAP HON
Chairman, South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC) &
Moderator, South Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church (SPEEC)
JUBA - SOUTH SUDAN.

The Most Rev. Dr. Stephen AMEYU MARTIN
Vice Chairman, South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC) &
Metropolitan Archbishop of JUBA & Apostolic Administrator
Catholic Diocese of TORIT
JUBA - SOUTH.



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The Most Rev. Dr. Justin BADI ARAMA
Primate and Archbishop, Province of Episcopal Church of South Sudan (ECSS) &
Metropolitan Archbishop of JUBA Diocese
JUBA - SOUTH SUDAN.

Rt. Rev. Bishop Dr. Isaiiah MAJOK DAU
General Overseer, Sudan Pentecostal Church (SPC)
JUBA - SOUTH SUDAN.

Rt. Rev. Bishop James LAGOS ALEXANDER
Presiding Bishop, Africa Inland Church (AIC)
JUBA - SOUTH SUDAN.

Rt. Rev. Moderator James MAKUEI CHUOL
Moderator of General Assembly
Presbyterian Church of South Sudan & Sudan (PCSS/S)
JUBA - SOUTH SUDAN.

Fr. James OYET LATANSIO PhD
General Secretary
South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC)
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Peace-Building Radio Talk show



South Sudan Council of Churches, in partnership, conducted a three-week Radio Talk. They were creating awareness on Peace, Trauma Healing, Forgiveness, and Reconciliation.

The activity was a follow up of a 2-week training conducted on peacebuilding to create space for active and honest participation of women and Youths in the processes of peacebuilding, it's also aimed to bridge the gap of women and youth not being included or recognized in taking up spaces of leadership by engaging women and youth of faith in advocating for and promoting peace in the country.

These radio talk shows were inclusive of both women and the youth, bringing in 36 participants advocating for youth and women's involvement in taking up spaces of leadership in South Sudan.

Eye Radio, City Fm, Bakhita Radio, and Advance Youth Radio were among the radios this pro-grams were aired on.

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SOLIDARITY VISIT TO YAMBIO AND TOMBURA.

South Sudan Council of Churches, with the support of Swiss Cooperation in Juba and UNMISS through the Neural form pillar, visited Yambio, Ezo, Source Yubu, Tombura and Nagero in solidarity with the ongoing internal conflict.

The one-week solidarity visit was led by the SSCC General Secretary Fr. James OYET LATANSIO accompanied by Bishop Isaiah Majok Dau, the General Overseer of Sudan Pentecostal Church, Emeritus Bishop of the African Inland Church Dr. Arkanjelo Wani Lemi, Bishop James Lagos Alexandar, the Presiding Bishop of African Inland Church, His Grace Dr. Stephen Ameyu Martin Mulla, the Metropolitan Archbishop of Catholic Diocese of Juba and the Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Torit and delegates from the Swiss Cooperation and UNMISS.

Colorfully received by the congregation at Yambio airstrip, the solidarity visit was to restore hope for the hopeless victims of the conflict. From May till now, hope was lost because of the ongoing tribal violence. The community of Tombura has been experiencing targeted killing between the Azanda and the Balanda community, destruction of properties, misunderstanding, mistrust, hatred, bringing division between the two communities resulting in displacement. The Azanda Community and the Balanda Community have lived together as a family for so long. General, the greater Western region (Western Equatoria) was one of the most peaceful states in South Sudan, even during the civil war that started in 2013 but all that was lost in May 2021.

The Azienda (Zande) are an ethnic group of North Central Africa. They are primarily in the northeastern part of the DRC, in the south-central and southwestern part of South Sudan and Southeastern Central African Republic. An esteem of 1,040,000 live here in South Sudan. Currently Tambura

The Balanda Bviri are an ethnic group living in the South Sudan state of . Western Bahr el Ghazal and Western Equatoria They number about 1,350,000 and speak Bviri, one of the Ubangian languages. The Balanda Bviri live in both Western Equatoria (Tambura, Nagero, Namatina, Mopoi, Yangiri, Nadiangere, Kobir Bawo) and Western Bahar El Ghazal (Bazia, Bagari and Dem Zubier).

There were so many concerns raised through truthful conversation with local leaders, government officials, and the Internal Displace people. A reasonable number of IDPs complained of no access to food and fear of famine.

On his opening remark, The General Secretary Fr. James Oyet LATANSIO said, "God has heard your prayer and that is the reason we are here, we have come to cry with you, we have lean you a shoulder to lean on, we also want to pray with you and to God for the restoration of hope and peace here" He further lamented that the Visit of the SSCC should have an impact on the community. "Seeing fellow South Sudanese is troubling, especially from a peaceful area like Western Equatoria."

Meanwhile, Dr. Arkanjelo Wani Lemi said death and killing is not the option for an ongoing problem. Problems will always be there; good things happen, and bad things happen too, but let people sit down and dialogue instead of killing ourselves. Let people find solutions, but the answers should not involve killing ourselves. "Our prayer is that people come back to their sense, leaders will begin to think of other means of providing leadership to their people such that they will continue to live together..... Please Turn to Page 11

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SOLIDARITY VISIT TO YAMBIO AND TAMBURA.

..... Continuation from Page 10.

The Paramount Chief of Ezo County said IDPs are being killed when going back to look for food for their children or family. He furthermore added that the host community in Ezo tried as much as possible to help the IDPs, but things keep getting astray as food is not now enough for both the host community and the IDPs. "The coming of the church leaders should be a blessing as these IDPs will not risk again going to the deserted farms. I pray that your prayers get answered" He said, "Most times we send reports about the situation, the response is not positive all the time. Sometimes I feel that we should all die instead of suffering like this". He questioned the government for not responding to the daring situation.

The Commissioner of Tombura county said the Azande and the Balanda had lived together since 1900; God created us to stay in Peace. "God receives our prayers through you. You (Church leaders) are the bridge between God and us. I believe your presence will bring Peace. Peace has to prevail in Tombura," he added. The 64 tribes of South Sudan fought for Peace in South Sudan, Western Equatoria doesn't belong to the two tribes, but it is for South Sudan. "We do not want segregation." He lamented.

In his remark, Archbishop Stephen Ameyu emphasized the need for a peaceful co-existence between Azanda and Balanda members, saying everyone has a role to play in bringing Peace to the greater western region. "The most important questions today are what must you do? what am I to do? In my society, what must I do? In Tombura, what must I do?". He furthermost cautioned the people to answer these questions with guidance. He also said that people should not use their guns to kill people.

Below: Photos from the solidarity visit in Yambio, Ezo, Source Yubu, Tombura and Nagero.



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2021 4TH EDITION GALLERY

Activity Pictures of 2021.



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