



# SOUTH SUDAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES (SSCC)

## QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER 2022

### FOURTH EDITION

#### FOREWORD



Welcome to the Quarter four edition of the Newsletter, 2022, which gives insights to the following:

1. “E c u m e n i c a l Pilgrimage of Peace to the Republic of South Sudan by His Holiness Pope Francis, The Most Rev. Dr. Justin Welby, and Rt. Rev. Dr. Iain Greenshields.
2. South Sudan Council of Churches Peace Dialogue;
3. South Sudan Council of Churches engagement with women and youth.

This month, we await the birth of our Saviour, the Prince of Peace. As we prepare for His birth, may we equally prepare our minds and hearts to receive Him. This is our only hope. Jesus Christ is our only hope. May we heed to his call for peace. It is possible for South Sudan to be a peaceful and prosperous country. Let us work for it tirelessly and wholeheartedly.

#### EXTENSION OF THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD.

The extension of the transitional period is an opportunity to genuinely accelerate the implementation of the R-ARCSS while bearing in mind that we must engage with the “hold out” groups to forge a way for sustainable peace in South Sudan. We can do this by involving women and youth in our interventions. Women are custodians of welfare and provide a unique touch to initiatives considering their courage and willingness to build and maintain peace. Youth are full of aspirations and innovations that are a prerequisite for drafting blueprints for the future of South Sudan.

May God bless you all during this festive season and beyond. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year 2023!

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#### IKWOTO PEACE DIALOGUE AND RECONCILIATION.

The crisis in Ikwoto County triggered by cattle raiding in the Mid-April 2022 spread very fast in its scope, causing more destructions, such as the burning of houses, and loss of lives, including the killing of two humanitarian workers on 9th August, resulting in the mass displacement of the people from Ikwoto to the nearby Payam's, bomas, and the refugee camp in Uganda. This conflict resulted in a close of roads and, ambushes, targeted killings, with no movement of the people.

As the conflict worsened, the South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC), with her local Church leaders, undertook an initiative to de-escalate the violent conflict further. The process took two phases, targeted Ikwotos Political leaders through a retreat in Torit from 15th August to 16th August 2022 as phase I and Phase II brought together political leaders and different stakeholders, community traditional leaders inclusive in a join forum meant for peace consultation at Isohe from 17th to 20th August 2022.

All the stakeholders involved bought-in into the Church-led initiative and pledged their commitment to support and work together to realize peace in the area, including security bodies and the county authorities, leading to the IKWOTO PEACE DIALOGUE AND RECONCILIATION. The processes concluded that all hostilities must cease, roads be opened, and there should be freedom of movement for the people across the county.



“  
**Let us look deep into our hearts, let us search our conscious, and if we are guilty of any crime, let us ask God to forgive us.**

**Archbishop  
Stephen Ameyu  
Martin Mulla**

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*Continuation from 2*



The Ikwoto Peace dialogue and reconciliation, held from the 11th – 16th Oct 2022 with an overall goal of having peaceful and reconciled communities of Ikwoto County and beyond, included a traditional reconciliation ritual performed at Logunyak.

According to the communities, the traditional reconciliation ritual will deter the return of the conflict and a covenant of reconciliation among the communities of Ikwoto.

The Ikwoto Peace dialogue and reconciliation aimed at creating a safe and accessible space for dialogue for the conflicting communities of Ikwoto County, building initial trust among the contradictory communities to address the root causes of the violent conflict in Ikwoto County and to reconcile and peacefully coexist among themselves and their neighbors.

The event was attended by different stakeholders, including the Community traditional leaders, youth and kraal leaders, women leaders, political leaders led by the Deputy Governor, organized and armed forces leaders, elites from the Seven Payams of Ikwoto County, Church leaders led by Archbishop Amenyo Stephen and interfaith groups, UN agencies, NGOs, CSOs, and CBOs.

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#### ACTION PLAN DOCUMENTATION IN WAU, MALAKAL AND JUBA.

The role played by Youth and women in peacebuilding is too big to be ignored. Women as custodians of welfare in the context of South Sudan are influential in political, social, and economic connotations. Youth are described as the hope for the nation as they have hopes and dreams that fuel the “vehicle” driving South Sudan towards peace and development. Hence it is essential to acknowledge the position of Youth and women in community settings and the country.

With support from Finn Church Aid, the South Sudan Council of Churches held sessions on documentation of action plans for Youth and women in Wau, Malakal and in Juba in June, July, and August respectively 2022.

This activity aimed to support women and Youth in defining their needs concerning peace and drafting a clear blueprint for their work. Further, to apply youth-sensitive and gender-responsive capacity-strengthening resources and knowledge tools to amplify and strengthen women and youth engagement in peacebuilding.

These sessions brought together seven Youth and eight women in Malakal to develop action plans while crafting timeframes and practicality in implementing these activities. In a bid to identify critical issues for women and Youth, a planning tool, problem tree analysis, was administered.

During these sessions, Youth from all the locations identified common issues such as unemployment, exploitation for conflict-related activities, and early and forced marriage caused by disunity, poverty, and tribalism. Meanwhile, the women raised issues that included conflict-related sexual violence, forced marriage, gender-based violence, insufficient knowledge of peacebuilding, and lack of capacity in income-generating activities and parenting.

The women further mentioned that these causes are a lack of the rule of law, lack of a proper education system, gender inequality, and the long-existing conflict in the region.



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#### COVID-19 PREVENTION AND HYGIENE PROMOTION TRAINING (TORIT and BOR).

The existence of the COVID-19 pandemic has doubled the needs and increased the vulnerability levels among the communities. In the current statics, South Sudan has recorded a total of 17,823 confirmed cases with 138 deaths.

To support the government's effort to prevent and control COVID-19, the South Sudan Council of Churches, in partnership with the LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION (LWF) and BROT FÜR DIE WELT organized a 2-day training in Torit and Bor respectively.

The training aimed at refreshing ICCs, state authority, and Church leaders' knowledge on COVID-19 prevention, vaccination, and behavioral hygiene change and enabled them to provide and create awareness.

The South Sudan Council of Churches trained over 100 participants in Torit and Bor.



Pictorial  
from the  
training in  
Torit and Bor.

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#### ANNUAL DIALOGUE FORUM FOR STAKEHOLDERS' PARTICIPATION IN APP (WAU & JUBA).



South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC) with support from Fin Church Aid (FCA), continues to implement Phase II of APPEAR project for the year 2022-2023. This project aims to achieve a sense of sustainable and inclusive peace in South Sudan.

In a two-day dialogue, Women, Youth, & Church leaders attended an Annual Dialogue Forum to increase the visibility & recognition of the positive role in peacebuilding in South Sudan and to gain depth knowledge of the Action Plan for Peace in the country. During an engagement of the head of the church's spiritual retreat in Kigali (August 2015) and a review of the APP in Lukenya (April 2022), the church leaders call for their contribution to resolve the recurring conflict in South Sudan.

Through its Inter-Church Committees and regional facilitators, the South Sudan Council of Churches remains a broad channel for reaching hundreds of communities across the country with peace messages using bottom-up approaches.

The two-day dialogue in Wau (13th – 14th Sept 2022) and Juba (18th – 19th Oct 2022) was to broaden the knowledge on the SSCC Action Plan for Peace and to widen the work of the Women and Youth of Faith and church leaders in the promotion and support of peacebuilding activities which contribute to communities living together in dignity and dialogue. Read More on the APP –

The dialogue aimed for Women and Youth of faith and religious leader to assess progress and achievement, gaps, and operational challenges in the implementation of the SSCC, Action Plan for Peace within the context at the state level, enhance information sharing on the implementation of the Action Plan for Peace by the religious leaders, women, and youth of faith and to inform church leaders, and women on the framework on the reviewed APP.

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#### MONTHLY PRAYERS AND FASTING.

The South Sudan Council of Churches persistently advocates for peace in South Sudan through prayers and fasting, personal, and group volunteer counseling, and home-to-home solidarity visit \_\_\_\_\_ MORE ABOUT HOME-TO-HOME VISITS ON PAGE 9 \_\_\_\_\_

Based on biblical context, the consistent advocacy message, and the prayers of the faithful change the narrative; it causes healing, deliverance, and restoration of the nation. To advocate and promote peaceful coexistence and the heart of forgiveness among the South Sudanese, monthly prayers and fasting has been conducted since the war broke out in 2015.

Women are among the critical pillars in enhancing understanding and implementing the various protocols of the R-ARCSS to foster commitment and local ownership in the peace processes. The prayers and fasting event aim at boosting the implementation of the multiple protocols of the revitalized peace agreement signed on September 12th, 2018, in Khartoum, Sudan.

Since the agreement processes progress slowly with many challenges, the SSCC National Women's link, Women Peace Committee, and Women Monthly Forum have dedicated every second Saturday of the month to pray and fast for God's intervention across the three greater Regions of South Sudan to bring an enabling environment for effective implementation of the peace Agreement.

The South Sudan Council of Churches endeavors to exert its efforts to contribute towards the implementation of the R-ARCSS through its member churches by encouraging dialogue.



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#### ALL AFRICA YOUTH CONGRESS, ACCRA, GHANA.

With an aim to inspire the young African generation to be Patriotic toward building a thriving continent and to recognize the contribution of young people. The All-Africa Conference of Churches organized her first-ever Youth Conference. According to the General Secretary, the All-Africa Youth Congress was to happen in 2020, but due to the pandemic outbreak, the congress was put on hold.

“Africa My Home, My Future” is the year’s theme. The Africa Youth Congress aimed at creating a viable space for networking and providing a space for constructive dialogue and innovation. Precisely, the conference was to allow youth from all corners of the continent to learn, encourage and share success stories among themselves.

The All-Africa Youth Congress that happened in Accra, Ghana, between the 31st Oct 2022 to the 5th Nov 2022, gathered a total of 900 + Youth delegates from 40 + Countries in Africa & Diaspora with 4 Thematic engagement of Youth and African Patriotism, Active Citizenship, Justice and Peace, African Dignity. These thematic areas were both covered during the main event and side events in the afternoons.

As Africa’s youthful population continues to rise, there has been uncertainty over the continent’s preparedness to tap into this resource for economic growth. There has been widespread frustration and agitation over the limited economic opportunities, growing corruption, rising unemployment, and limited opportunities for political participation by African Youth. Because of this growing frustration, many migrate to western “countries,” where better opportunities are believed to exist, subjecting the continent to ‘brain drain’ and capital flight while others are recruited into extremist groups.

In partnership with the Finn Christian Aid, FCA, DCA, AACC Liaison Office to AU, AACC, and Arigatou, the South Sudan Council of Churches sent over 16 Youth delegates/Members from different churches to get inspiration, network, and get experience stories from the various youth. As a result of the AAYC, the youth of faith from SSCC member Churches committed to creating a forum to share knowledge with South Sudanese youth, mainly patriotism, active citizens, and how to build African dignity through focusing on South Sudan’s national identity.



*Church leaders and Youth delegates pose for a photo during the AAYC in Accra, Ghana.*

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#### HOME TO HOME OUTREACH SOLIDARITY VISIT

With support from Finn Church Aid, the South Sudan Council of Churches facilitated a Home To Home Outreach Solidarity Visit in both the two greater regions of Equatoria and Bahr-El-Ghazal. SSCC believes that for South Sudanese to achieve peace, it is crucial to facilitate localized engagements with women.

The women groups in the two greater regions conducted these solidarity visits to homes identified by the women's peace committees in the various communities within their regions. The Solidarity visit aimed at encouraging and inspiring vulnerable women in the community – pray with them and conduct psychosocial counseling. It also aimed at advocating for a sense of sustainable peace in the communities and the nation through peace messages during the visits and to encourage and cultivate the spirit of love, tolerance, forgiveness, and reconciliation in the greater regions and the country.

SSCC operates in three regional offices i.e., Greater Equatoria, Greater Bahr-El-Ghazal, and the Upper Nile. Unfortunately, this activity wasn't carried out in the greater upper Nile due to insecurity.

With expectations to visit more families next year, the women of faith and women link in Juba successfully visited 43 families in 5 different areas i.e Munuki, Gurei/Gudele, Kator, Lologo and Gumbo/Shrikat, and 10 families in Wau (South Wau and North Wau) with the majority of the families for widows, orphans, elderly, the lonely, disabled and vision impaired.

During these visits women of faith, women peace committee and the women link were able to share with these individuals sugar, soap, cooking oil and rice.



A few photos  
from the solidarity visits in Juba and  
Wau. *AB Some pictures can't be displayed due  
to consent.*

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#### POPE RESCHEDULES VISIT TO SOUTH SUDAN TO EARLY FEB 2023.



Pope Francis has rescheduled his long-awaited visit to South Sudan from Feb 3rd to 5th, 2023.

During a press conference at the South Sudan Council of Churches Secretariate in Juba, the Apostolic Nunciature (Holy See-Vatican Embassy) in South Sudan announced that the Papal will make the announced Apostolic Journey to the Democratic Republic of Congo from Jan 31st to Feb 3rd, 2023, visiting Kinshasa, together with the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Moderator of the General

Assembly of the Church of Scotland....” He added. Meanwhile, The Most. Rev. Dr. Stephen Ameyu Martin Mulla urged the government to provide and improve security for the faithful from the states to attend this Apostolic Journey.

South Sudan, from 3rd to 5th February. The Ecumenical Pilgrimage of Peace to South Sudan, scheduled for July 2022, was called off due to a persistent knee ailment. In a statement released by the Vatican Press, the call off of the twin trip to Africa was at the Doctors request.

The eminent Global leaders are expected to arrive at Juba International Airport on Feb 3rd, 2023, at 15:00, followed by a Courtesy visit to the president of the Republic at the presidential palace, meeting with the vice president of the Republic, and finalizing the first day of the visit with meeting with Authorities, civil society, and the Diplomatic Corps.

In between the three-day visit to South Sudan, Ponfitt is expected to meet with the clergy, and Internally Displaced Persons, together with the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, will hold an ecumenical prayer at John Garang Mausoleum at 18:00 on the Feb 4th, 2023.

The minister of Presidential Affairs, Dr. Barnaba Marial Benjamin Bil, said the government is delighted that His Holiness the Pope is coming to Juba at last. “This is great news for the government and the people of South Sudan”. He lamented. The government will do all that they can in order to make a safe visit of His Holiness the Pope, together with the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr.

Welby, as well as the Moderator General of the Presbyterian of Church of Scotland....” He added. Meanwhile, The Most. Rev. Dr. Stephen Ameyu Martin Mulla urged the government to provide and improve security for the faithful from the states to attend this Apostolic Journey.

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## 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM 2022



The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence is an international campaign to end violence against women and advocate for women's rights. The campaign that was inceptioned in 1991 runs from the 25th of November (International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women) to the 10th of December (International Human Rights)

According to a report by the National Ministry of Gender, Gender Based Violence has been categorized as; Sexual assault at 3%, forced marriage at 6%, denial of resources at 12%, rape at 14%, psych/emotional abuse at 23%, and physical marriage 41%. Because of women being in abusive relationships and marriages due to culture, traditions, or taboos, Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) has risen in the country with fewer reports from the survivors and victims. This has not only limited the activities in the women and girls' spaces to access support systems/safe spaces but added a greater risk of experiencing economic abuse as well as sexual exploitation and abuse.

This year the South Sudan Council of Churches, in partnership with Kairos, joint the campaign in a unique and memorable way. The women link did not only have a radio talk show campaigning to end GBV, but they visited marketplaces to raise awareness on sexual exploitation and sexual gender-based violence to women in the markets and women in business and empowered them with knowledge on how to report and avoid sexual exploitation and to unite with the men in the market to end violence against women and girls. Furthermore, the women link visited families and encouraged discussions on the SGBV in small groups.

Finalizing the 16 Days of activism, the women link, ICCs, Youth of Faith, and Church leaders gathered in the Guest House to celebrate the importance of raising awareness on ending Gender Based Violence. This was done through songs, dramas, and dances.

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#### ANNUAL YOUTH OF FAITH CONFERENCE 2022.

In November 2021, SSCC and FCA piloted the first “Youth of Faith Conference” in Juba, which brought together over 60 youth of faith from the regional offices Equatoria(Juba), Bahr El Ghazel (Wau), and Upper Nile (Malakal). The Conference, which lasted for three days, created a platform for the youth to share ideas and experiences in their work, inspirational leaders including Hon. Rebecca Joshua were selected to dialogue and share their stories.

The key recommendations from the conclusion of the pilot 2021 conference included youth exchange visits to learn and share experiences, which happened in Wau, Ghana, and Juba in July, Nov, and Dec 2022, respectively. Further recommendations included training on trauma healing and conflict sensitivity.

Towards actualizing the APP, the SSCC youth desk, in collaboration with FCA, organized the second annual youth of faith conference that brought together 65 youths of faith to Juba with selected special guests and partners. Participants were selected from the APPEAR project areas; Juba, Malakal, and Wau.

Under the Theme Intergenerational dialogue in support of youth engagement in peacebuilding, the December 2022 conference aimed at giving youth opportunities to participate in a well-thought-out conference. The three days annual youth of Conference provided a platform for sharing experiences, knowledge, and learning from each other on how to engage the youth on SSCC Action Plan for Peace in their respective regions. To widen the scope for learning and information sharing, selected number of conference participants were selected to be a part of a radio talk show.

Among the mentors were Emeritus Bishop Arkanjelo Wani Lemi, Presiding Bishop of the African Inland Church (AIC), Rt. Rev. Bishop James Lagos Alexander, Former General Overseer of Sudan Pentecostal Church, Isaiah Majok Dau , Undersecretary MoPB, Hon.Pia Philip Ms Lydia Mingani from the SWISS Cooperation, Ms, Riya Yuyada of Crown the woman, to mention be few.

## QUOTES.

“You have a role to play in your society, this country is not only yours, but you have the responsibility to bring your people together for peace..... Your role as a mediator is to shut your mouth and open your eyes and ears.” Bishop Arkanjelo Wani Lemi.

“You need to build your potential as a youth. You should use your time effectively.” Country Director Mr. Berhanu Haile.

“South Sudan is your country, not ours; no country around the world is better than yours. You must own it, believe in yourself, and believe in your country.” Undersecretary MoPB, Hon.Pia Philip.

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## ANNUAL YOUTH CONFERENCE GALLERY



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#### GREATER TAMBURA CHURCH AND LOCAL LEADERS' CONSULTATION MEETING IN YAMBIO.

In collaboration with ICC, IFCPI, UNMISS and the National Ministry of peacebuilding, the SSCC organized a consultative meeting for Church leaders and local leaders in Greater Tambura from the 28th-30th and 1st – 3rd December 2022, respectively, to find a lasting solution to Greater Tambura's conflict. The three-day consultative meeting that brought in delegates from Nagero, Namutina, Source-Yubu, Ezo County, Anzara, Tambura, and Yambio commenced with a biblical reflection from Emeritus Isaiah Dau quoting from Genesis 4:9-15, the first experience of the death of Cain and Abel.



Since May 2021, hope has been lost due to the ongoing tribal conflict between the Azanda and the Balanda Communities. The community in Tambura has experienced targeted killing, destruction of properties, misunderstanding, mistrust, and hatred, bringing division between the two communities which resulted in displacement. The Azanda and the Balanda Communities 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. Unfortunately, all that was lost in May 2021.

Photos: Pictures taken during the three day meeting in Yambio.

In the quest for a wave of sustainable peace in the Western Region and South Sudan at large, the South Sudan Council of Churches has had a series of conversations and visits. In early December 2021, the SSCC visited Yambio, Ezo, Source Yubu, Tambura, and Nagero in solidarity with the ongoing internal conflict. The SSCC organized political leaders meeting both in Juba and Yambio and met with locals to find the root causes of the conflict, looking for a long-lasting solution.

According to the delegates, the current crisis needs the political leaders in Juba to get the grassroots for easy problem-solving. So many IDPs remain in Camps due to fear. Due to the insecurity, cultivation has been a problem resulting in starvation in most camps. Injustice, security, hate speech, negative influence, lack of the rule of law, limited services, and development were some of the key issues pointed out.

However, there is a call for a peace conference in Tambura in February 2023, its believed that this would end the ongoing differences in Western Equatoria.

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#### ACTION PLAN FOR PEACE

The Action Plan for Peace is a homegrown and Church-led strategy for Peace and reconciliation, comprehensively addressing the root causes and long-term effects of conflict through its pillars. The Action Plan for Peace identifies three (3) areas of action that directly contribute to and complement the implementation of peace agreements and community peace processes.

Launched in August 2015 with a review in April 2022, it signifies an approach to ending violence in South Sudan that builds on grassroots engagement and decades of experience.

**Advocacy Pillar:** lays out an avenue to influence policies and decision-making towards peacefully resolving conflict and changing the narrative from conflict to Peace.

**Neutral Forum Pillar:** provides a safe space for stakeholders to discuss the root causes of conflict and envisions a peaceful future through dialogue.

**Reconciliation Pillar:** seeks to restore and heal broken relationships within the nation; only through forgiveness and reconciliation shall we live as one nation.

**Spiritual Pillar:** is a cross-cutting pillar that facilitates SSCC to play a role in providing spiritual and moral support to transform the attitudes of South Sudanese towards Peace, reconciliation, and social cohesion.

**Capacity (Organizational) Strengthening:** building organizational solid ability and structures to manage large-scale and long-lasting processes with professionalism and accountability. The fourth Pillar enables the mapping and enhancement of national capacity, strengths, and opportunities within the institution with a concerted focus on building a solid SSCC.

#### SSCC VISION AND MISSION

### VISION

A just and peaceful South Sudan inspired and transformed by Godly values towards holistic and equitable development of all people.

### MISSION

To proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ and demonstrate the holistic witness and united mission of the Church in South Sudan through corporate activities and enabling community programmes.

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