

Friday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2023

## SOUTH SUDAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES (SSCC) STATEMENT ON NONVIOLENCE.

*"Put your sword back in its place ..." (Matthew 26:52).*

South Sudan has recently experienced the joy of the Ecumenical Peace Pilgrimage to South Sudan by Pope Francis, Archbishop Dr Justin Welby, and Rt. Rev. Moderator Dr Iain Greenshields. All three of our global Church Leaders were united in their call for nonviolence as the solution to South Sudan's problems. Deeper than simply avoiding war, nonviolence calls us to a new way of life which respects the dignity of every person and the integrity of creation.

Nonviolence names a core value of the Gospel, in which Jesus combined an unmistakable rejection of violence with the power of love and truth in action for justice and peace. Nonviolence is broader than pacifism. It is much more than the absence of violence and it is never passive. It is a spirituality, a constructive force, an effective method for social transformation, and a powerful way of life committed to the well-being of all.

At the Church Leaders' retreat in Lukenya, Kenya, in 2022 to review the South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC) Action Plan for Peace (APP) the Heads of Churches agreed that Gospel nonviolence should be an essential avenue for the Church to foster peace in South Sudan. They requested the global ecumenical partners to support them in increasing their knowledge of active nonviolence. From 7<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> March 2023, following the Ecumenical Peace Pilgrimage to South Sudan, and encouraged and empowered by the message of the three global Church Leaders, South Sudanese Heads of Churches met in Good Shepherd Pastoral Centre, Kit, South Sudan to reflect on nonviolence. They and other senior members of their Churches together with staff of South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC) examined nonviolence in the Gospel; the example set first by Jesus Christ and followed by courageous Church Leaders such as Archbishop Desmond TUTU and Rev. Dr Martin LUTHER KING Jnr; the increasing emphasis on active nonviolence not only in the global Christian family but also in other faiths and in the secular sphere; evidence-based academic research on the efficacy of nonviolent action; practical techniques and methodology of nonviolence; and a case study of nonviolence in our neighbour, Sudan.

As a result, the CHURCH of Christ in South Sudan, both through its individual members and its Council of Churches, recommits itself to Gospel nonviolence. It rejects any form of violence and commits itself to a prophetic stance against violence and injustice. This is not a passive approach, not simply submitting to or colluding with violence, but it is active and prophetic in responding to all forms of violence, amongst individuals, families, clans, tribes, and political and military factions, and including systemic violence embedded in our cultural, societal, and political life.

In doing this we act as faithful disciples of Jesus Christ Our Lord to foster peace and justice in our beloved nation. We call upon all Christians and all people of good will in South Sudan to live a nonviolent life and to respond actively, courageously, and nonviolently to all

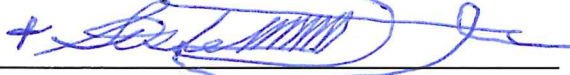


manifestations of violence. We welcome the continued support and encouragement of the universal CHURCH as we continue this journey shaped by Gospel nonviolence.

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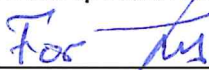
Rt. Rev. Thomas TUT PUOT MUT  
Moderator, South Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church (SSPEC)  
And Chairman, South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC).



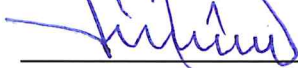
The Most Rev. Dr Stephen AMEYU MARTIN MULLA  
Metropolitan Archbishop of JUBA  
Catholic Church.



The Most Rev. Dr Justin BADI ARAMA  
Primate, Province of the Episcopal Church of South Sudan (ECSS)  
And Metropolitan Archbishop of JUBA Diocese.



Bishop James LAGOS ALEXANDER  
Presiding Bishop, Africa Inland Church (AIC).



Rt. Rev. Moderator James MAKUEI CHUOL  
Moderator of the 34<sup>th</sup> General Assembly  
Presbyterian Church of South Sudan (PCSS).




Bishop James LADU EMILIANO  
General Overseer, Sudan Pentecostal Church (SPC).



Rev. Benykeng AJAK  
Acting Chairman, Sudan Interior Church (SIC).



Bishop Simon NYAMARA TIBI  
Presiding Bishop, Christian Brotherhood Church (CBC).



Fr. James OYET LATANSIO PHD  
General Secretary,  
South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC)  
JUBA - SOUTH SUDAN.

