



SOUTH SUDAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES (SSCC)

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER 2023

FIRST EDITION

FOREWORD

Peace is Possible in South Sudan!
Fr. James OYET LATANSIO, GENERAL SECRETARY.

Peace is possible in South Sudan. It is about the will to bring all conflicts to an end and look at building the country's future. For a country that has been through a series of calamities, it is time to focus on reconstructing what has been destroyed. At the inception of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS), the assumption was that by the end of this transition, total peace would have been restored in the country, the internally displaced people resettled, the refugees returned home, the permanent constitution developed and adopted, culminating to elections to usher the country to usual and normal governance.

There is still a lot to be done. The country is still flimsy with an economy on the brink of collapse, a deteriorating humanitarian situation with more than two million displaced people, and, escalating hunger, inconsistent and unsteady political will to fully implement the R-ARCSS. The country still faces identity crisis and conflict ethnographically. All these recent shifts make it difficult to predict the country's political stability, but we believe there will be a bright morning. The church continues to engage with actors to backlashes, hoping to get them to agree to resort to dialogue instead of violence.

The Ecumenical Pilgrimage of Peace of Pope Francis, Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, and Rev. Dr. Iain M Greenshields, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, to South Sudan in February 2023, has restored hope in the people. The church's unity has also been confirmed and projected to the people. It is, therefore, safe to say there is hope amidst all hopelessness.

Looking at the future of South Sudan, it is important to create an environment that is conducive for the rule of law. It is also important to work towards establishing the Commission for Truth, Healing, and Reconciliation to pave the way for justice and sustainable peace. The Permanent Constitution needs to be finalized with clear components on election law and voters' rights. There is also need for institutional capacity building in all government sectors. South Sudanese have built their whole lives on resilience, which I believe is not enough. Resilience is key, but there is a risk of bouncing back and never getting up again. What will keep us up, strong and thriving, is the sustainable peace we must build. Peace can only be built and sustained through capacity building in institutions and transforming people's attitudes.

We all have a role that we must play to ensure there is peace in South Sudan. As you read the 1st edition of our newsletter in 2023, may you remember the words of Pope Francis, "There is no room for further delay." Let us bring this message to life by working tirelessly and swiftly for Peace in South Sudan.



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ECUMENICAL PILGRIMAGE OF PEACE



PHOTO: Pope Francis preparing to give a speech during his meeting with the IDPs.

"Hope is the word I would leave with each of you, as a gift to share, a seed to bear fruit."

"I have come here as a pilgrim of reconciliation, in the hope of accompanying you on your journey of peace..... So I have come with two brothers, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, whom I thank for all that they will say to us. Together, stretching out our hands, we present ourselves to you and to these people in the name of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace." Pope Francis's opening remark in the presidential palace.

The long-awaited visit to South Sudan marks the Holy Father's fifth Apostolic Journey to the African Continent. During the three-day visit to South Sudan's Capital, Juba, the eminent global church leaders had a Courtesy visit to the president of the Republic of South Sudan at the presidential palace, met with the vice president of the Republic of South Sudan, and finalized the first day of the visit with a meeting with Authorities, civil society, and the Diplomatic Corps.

"Let us work tirelessly, dear brothers and sisters, for the peace that the Spirit of Jesus and the Father urges us to build: a peace that integrates diversity and promotes unity in plurality." Pope Francis to the congregation during the Ecumenical Prayer.

On the second day, Ponfitt met with the clergy and victims of the civil war which broke out in 2013 and 2016; the Internally Displaced Persons came from various states, including Bentiu, Leer, Wau, Malakal, the surrounding areas, and Juba. Together with the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, the holy father summed the day up with an Ecumenical prayer at John Garang Mausoleum. The prayer hosted by the three Eminent Global Leaders called for Christian unity and communal work toward a sustainable wave of peace in South Sudan.

"Even if our hearts bleed for the wrongs we have suffered, let us refuse, once and for all, to repay evil with evil. Let us accept one another and love one another with sincerity and generosity, as God loves us," Francis said.



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"This 'being one' is something we must all practice, and yet it is especially the responsibility of leaders." Archbishop of Canterbury Rev. Justin Welby

"In the unity of Faith, we offer solidarity with the Churches, the people and leaders of this country who genuinely seek change through peace for a future which is optimistic and hopeful." The Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland Rev. Iain Greenshields

Pope Francis concluded the three-day pilgrimage of Peace to South Sudan on Sunday with an open-air Mass at the John Garang Mausoleum. During the prayer that more than 100,000 people attended, Pope Francis urged the people of South Sudan to resist the venom of hatred to achieve long-lasting peace and prosperity. The 86-year-old emphasizes reconciliation, unity, and forgiveness.

"Dear brothers and sisters, I return to Rome with you even closer to my heart," he told them. "Never lose hope. And lose no opportunity to build peace. May hope and peace dwell among you. May hope and peace dwell in South Sudan!"



Most Revd Justin Badi Arama greeting Most Revd Justin Welby on his arrival to Juba.



Pictorial during the Ecumenical Peace Pilgrimage.



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ECUMENICAL PEACE PILGRIMAGE CAMPAIGN.

As the country continues with efforts to overcome the hurdles of implementing the peace agreement, much more must be done. Pope Francis has continued to put efforts to contribute to peace in South Sudan. In April 2019, the Pope hosted South Sudanese leaders in a two-day spiritual retreat at the Vatican and, in an unprecedented gesture, kissed the feet of the rival leaders as he urged them to strengthen South Sudan's faltering peace process. As a follow-up to this retreat, there was an ecumenical visit by global church leaders led by the Pope from 3rd -5th February 2023 in Juba, South Sudan, joined by the Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby and Rev. Dr. Iain M Greenshields, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

South Sudan Council of Churches through the Advocacy pillar conducted a range of Radio Talk shows to create more awareness of the apostolic journey and shed more light on how the Ecumenical Peace Pilgrimage to South Sudan will impact the people of South Sudan i.e. Youth, Women, Church leaders, Political leaders/Stakeholders.

As South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC) continues to implement the Sustainable Transition from Violence to Peace in South Sudan project to address issues of peace and reconciliation through the church and increase women's role in the peace process. This campaign was to further support South Sudan's journey to restore peace by promoting and amplifying the commitments made at the Rome retreat in 2019 and to promote and protect the church's unity in SS and its Action Plan for Peace.

"Forgiveness is key; if someone has wronged you, you should forgive them; prayers alone without forgiveness and reconciliation cannot work. Let us all prepare! Prepare for this Ecumenical Pilgrimage with open and clean hearts. Pope loves us. That is why he is coming for us."

Mama Lily Richard Women Link.



"There is no way we have peace of mind in our lives if we don't get into prayers and forgive each other. We should express the feeling that we need peace as South Sudanese not affiliated with religion and tribal. Let the Pope realize that we are yearning for Peace..... There is nothing hard for God to do." Night Agnes – Youth Peace Ambassador.

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GRANT KICK-OFF MEETING 2023.

South Sudan council of churches (SSCC) has been the official implementing partner of the Finn Church Aid APPEAR project since 2020. The APPEAR project addresses challenges that hinder the participation of women and Youth of faith in the implementation of SSCC's Action Plan for Peace (APP). Women and youth nationwide face distinct and discriminated barriers to their participation in leadership, decision-making, and inclusion in peacebuilding processes in South Sudan.



The gap between women and not being included or recognized in taking up leadership spaces is to be addressed by engaging them on faith bases advocating for promoting peace at the grassroots level through women and youth-led advocacy processes, neutral forums, and people-to-people reconciliation processes in the communities.

To kick off the implementation process for 2023, the SSCC core team and FCA team conducted a one-day meeting to reflect on lessons learned and evaluate last year's implementation achievements, challenges, and way forward for 2023 project activities.

The grant kick-off meeting that was attended by 15 members from SSCC and FCA further aimed at bridging the gaps during this year's implementation process.

APPEAR initiative is to advocate for the promotion of Peace and Reconciliation through civil societies, youth, and women of faith in South Sudan, which started in Juba and spread throughout the three regions of Wau, Malakal, and Juba respectively.





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ANNUAL PLANNING MEETING.

Photo from the Annual Plan 2022-2023 meeting. This meeting included the core staffs from the regions and the secretariate.



In partnership with Christian AIDs -South Sudan, the South Sudan Council of Churches conducted a three-day Annual Plan meeting for 2022-2023. The Annual Plan 2022-2023 meeting aimed at drawing lessons that will guide to implement of the council's planned activities for FY 2023/2024, Address questions of the current changing context, and develop action plans to achieve the council goals by laying down the best roadmap that will drive council departments through to ameliorate the sufferings, analysis the current dynamics of the communal attacks and activities which had been carefully envisaged to be used for implementation of reviewed Action Plan for Peace 2022-2023.

This meeting was conducted as part of a tiered set of goals, objectives, and indicators to define mission fulfillment and improve the effectiveness of the council program. The Strategic Plan goals and objectives of the meeting were aligned with

the APP II Indicators and targets to guide all areas of council operations toward fulfillment of the South Sudan Council of Churches mission: Transforming lives and enriching communities.

South Sudan Council of Churches derives annual strategic priorities from the previous APP strategic plans to provide the framework for tactical and operational planning of offices, regions, and departments. The Strategic Plan will be monitored monthly by the program staff and BoT. and the council's Executive committee.

Through its country-wide constituency accessed through the Inter-Church Committees and regional facilitators, the Church remains a broad channel for reaching hundreds of communities nationwide with peace messages activities using bottom-top approaches.

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SOUTH SUDAN CHURCH LEADERS' MEETING ON GOSPEL NONVIOLENCE.



From 6-10 March 2023, the South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC) invited Church Leaders from across South Sudan to participate in a retreat on Gospel nonviolence. The SSCC Action Plan for Peace (APP) the Church Leaders had agreed that Gospel nonviolence should be an essential avenue for the Church to foster peace in South Sudan. Led by SSCC General Secretary, Father James Oyet Latansio, the 2023 retreat was facilitated by John Ashworth and Nico Plooijer,

who both have long term experience in South Sudan, including for SSCC and PAX (Netherlands). Imadaddin Babikir, civil society activist and human rights defender, brought to the gathering his deep experience of nonviolent social movements in Sudan. I was deeply honored to participate in the retreat and to share a reflection on nonviolence as a spirituality, a way of life, a method for change and a global ethic.

The Church Leaders' extraordinary interest in Gospel nonviolence was rooted in their appreciation of nonviolence as central to the message and witness of Jesus and their deep understanding of the crucial role that nonviolence could play in the difficult journey of South Sudan toward just peace. Since 2013, two years after independence, South Sudan has been facing unrelenting multidimensional violence – war and military violence, extortion, corruption, torture, disappearances, gang violence, domestic violence, gender violence, the dehumanizing violence of deep poverty.

Participants spoke together about the importance of helping the people of South Sudan to heal from the trauma they have experienced and to change the narrative that is driving continued violence. They recognized the many ways that violence is present in South Sudanese society, including in the Churches themselves. They spoke about nonviolence as a new facet of faith, a new methodology, but some acknowledged that they have been talking about nonviolence for many years and that now it is time to put it into action, to take a step away from violence.

They also named multiple ways to activate nonviolence in their communities – through preaching and bible studies, posters, telephone and radio campaigns, prayer marches; through the curriculum in Church schools and universities; through the healing of trauma and activities with youth; through nonviolence trainings; by involving local leadership of clans and tribes, as well as members of parliament; by getting rid of guns; by creating a manual on nonviolence for Church Leaders; by promoting nonviolent communication in families; by electing independent governors and other political leaders; by recognizing the power of mothers.

In their final statement, the Church Leaders stated that with other senior members of their Churches and SSCC staff, they had examined nonviolence in the Gospel; the example set first by Jesus Christ and followed by others like Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Rev. Dr Martin Luther King, Jr.; 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 Sudan.

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Their conclusion and commitment were clear and powerful:

... 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.

In a powerful expression of ecumenical commitment, the statement was signed by the Chair and General Secretary of the SSCC and Church Leaders from the Catholic Church, the Episcopal Church of South Sudan, the Presbyterian Church of South Sudan, the South Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church, the Africa Inland Church, the Sudan Pentecostal Church, the Sudan Interior Church and the Christian Brotherhood Church.

Marie Dennis
Catholic Nonviolence Initiative
Pax Christi International



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FOLLOW UP WORKSHOP ON GENDER RELATIONS AND MASCULINITY WITH SIDE-BY-SIDE FAITH



Gender holds the ideals of masculinity and femininity; it is the relations of power between women and men, boys, and girls (and shapes relations among men, women, boys, and girls). It is both the beliefs and the practices of gender that structure our experiences as men and women.

South Sudan Council of Churches, with support from KAIROS Canada, organized a three-day follow-up training on gender relations and masculinity with reference to a similar training conducted in April 2022. The follow-up training was conducted on 12th -14th January 2023 at Juba Christian Centre South Sudan (JCC) in Juba with 215 participants (170 females and 30 males), 15 participants of those were from Wau, ten from Malakal, and 200 from Juba.



The follow-up training workshop aimed at imparting knowledge and raising awareness on the foundations of gender relations regarding masculinities through appreciation of facts and reflection on everyday realities to foster positive mindset change towards gender relations. The workshop intended to enhance understanding of masculinity, construction, and connection with violence against women and girls. In addition, to foster change and reflection on gender inequality and power imbalances by analyzing masculinity and identifying steps, commitments, and measures to promote gender relations.

With the knowledge gained in the three days, participants developed an Action Plan that included individual actions at the family, church, and community levels to raise awareness on gender relations issues and gender-based violence. This ensured the continuity, commitment, and provision of opportunities to support the participants in reinforcing their knowledge and skills.



Photos:
Women of faith at
the Masculinity and gender
relations follow up workshop.



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MONTHLY PRAYER AND FASTING.



The South Sudan Council of Churches' women of faith i.e, women's link, women's peace committee, and the women's forum continue to seek everlasting peace in South Sudan through monthly prayers. The Monthly Prayers conducted in all three regions aim at achieving sustainable peace in South Sudan by promoting harmony, and peaceful co-existence and cultivating the spirit of forgiveness among the people of South Sudan.

Through the monthly prayers, that happen every second Saturday of the month, women are able to understand the implementation of the R-ARCSS and foster commitment and local ownership in the process. The prayers and fasting also call for God's intervention to bring and enable the environment for the effective implementation of the peace agreement.

This year's Monthly prayer and fasting is unique as women have chosen to go to various markets instead of conducting it in the church premises.

Due to economic hardships and so many other reasons, not all believers go to church, therefore, the rationale for taking the prayers to the market is to meet people who don't go to church with the messages of love, hope, forgiveness, reconciliation, peaceful coexistence, and unity.

Taken from the book of Genesis 4: 8,- 12. The preacher of the day Mama Margaret Barshaba, said *"Our situation in South Sudan is like that of Abel and Cain. We should stop killing our brothers and sisters because their Innocent blood will keep crying up to God in Heaven for revenge. As Christians, we should love each other and be keepers of our brothers and sisters. Let us protect them instead of killing them out of jealousy."*

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IMATARI COMMUNITY PEACE DIALOGUE IN ISOHE.

In partnership with the SWISS COOPERATION, the South Sudan Council of Churches facilitated a community peace dialogue in Isohe. The dialogue from the 10th to 12th of February 2023 brought over one hundred people from three Bomas of Torit County of Eastern Equatoria State, i.e., Imatari – Lloli, Oguruny, and Olianga, including Obira, Burung, and Loyoro.

This dialogue resulted from a request by the local community leaders of the three bomas asking the Church to facilitate the peaceful resolution of their conflict, which started around May 2022. Ever since the first incident, this conflict has resulted in insecurity in the three villages- road ambushes and killings, revenge and targeted killings of innocent people, and stealing and raiding of livestock. The conflict in question caused fears and broken relationships among the communities, including restrictions on free movement in the area, limited or no essential services, and fear of killings.



The three-day peace dialogue targeted stakeholders from the three bomas and their allies, i.e., Heads of cattle camps youth, women leaders, chiefs, elders, and church leaders. During the dialogue, the Church engaged some senior political leaders and elites of the regions for a buy-in into the peaceful resolution of the crisis. As a result, the Church has been asked to timely intervention whenever conflict arises –



directly involve the critical actors of the conflict, especially the youth – women's voices remain the voices of truth and importance in conflict resolution processes – the Church continues to be trusted and a safe place.

Furthermore, there was an immediate cessation of hostility in the areas, the opening of roads, and free movement of the people - trust was rebuilt among members, and they drew a roadmap as their deterrence mechanism to address current and future conflict peacefully – they also agreed to continue engaging in peace activities and establish clear contacts for coordination and networking.



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CHURCH LEADERS TRAINING ON COVID 19 BEHAVIORAL CHANGE, VACCINATION, AND HYGIENE AWARENESS IN BOR



PHOTO: Pictorial of Church leaders in Bor taking during the training at Ariop Hotel-Bor (jonglei state)

South Sudan has a low vaccination coverage of about 3% which is attributed to many factors, such as the hesitancy of the communities to take the vaccine, which is the main hindering factor and is mainly attributed to low-risk perception and fear from the negative circulating rumors about the vaccine and lack of accessibility to other areas due to floods.

Following the COVID-19 preventive measures is a huge challenge in South Sudan as communities need to follow the preventive measures. To reduce the effects of COVID-19 and fight the virus, there is a need for demand generation for vaccination through community engagement activities in different parts and levels of the communities.

With support from Brot für die Welt through LWF (The Lutheran World Federation), the South Sudan Council of Churches believes that church leaders have a more significant role in creating awareness by advocating for COVID-19 prevention and vaccination during church gatherings. Hence, to boost the COVID-19 prevention and vaccination campaign, the South Sudan Council of Churches trained 111 church leaders in Bor on COVID-19 prevention, vaccination, and hygiene, which was completed successfully.

This training tackled questions/areas like: - How people can get the vaccines, its benefits, who can get vaccinated, possible risk factors, rumor tracking, and management, etc.



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MUKAYA LEADERS CONSULTATIVE MEETING

The South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC) facilitated a two-day consultative meeting for Juba's Mukaya Leaders and intellectuals from 16th to 17th February 2023. PAX South Sudan and Technical support from the SWISS office in Juba supported the process.

The Mukaya people of Lainya County have been adversely affected socially, economically, and politically since the country returned to war between 2013 and 2016. Most Mukaya bomas have been affected due to different activities of armed groups in the area, coupled with divisions among its people and clans, including their politicians and intellectuals.

According to the leaders from Mukaya, the people remain hopeless, with no attempt made to assist in resolving the situation. The meeting brought about 25 leaders who identified truthfully and openly discussed their concerns to build trust, confidence, reconciliation, and peace among their different segments of the community,

namely political leadership, community and traditional leaders, and religious leaders.

Among other issues, the community raised the lack of humanitarian assistance in Yei and camps in Uganda, disunity among leaders, elites, and intellectuals of Mukaya, the influx of cattle herders and armed groups, killing of innocent people, and looting of properties by armed groups, leadership gap, and identity issues.

After thorough deliberations, the leaders agreed to the principles of working together to embrace shared values and interests characterized by unity of purpose, consultations on matters of reconciliation in the community, and engagements with policymakers to create a peaceful environment for the return of local citizens, creating awareness on the violation of human rights issues and the status of the R-ARCSS etc.



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ACTION PLAN FOR PEACE PHASE TWO (APP2) ORIENTATION MEETING.



Pictorial from the orientation meeting held in Juba, SSCC hall.

Based on the APP(I) review in April 2022 and with funding from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs for APP phase two in November 2022, PAX organized a two-day orientation meeting for partners, i.e., PAX, South Sudan Council of Churches, and local partners.

The orientation workshop that commenced on the 22nd – 23rd of March 2023 included representatives from the South Sudan Council of Churches, PAX, the Dutch Embassy in Juba, Interchurch Committees (ICCs), Catholic Diocese of Torit (CDoT), Catholic Diocese of Malakal (CDoM), Holy Trinity Peace Village Kuron (HTPVK), and Reconcile International.

The meeting aimed to introduce PAX APP II partners and the Inter-Church Committees to the Action Plan for Peace pillars, strengthen the spirit of collegiality and coordination amongst the partners for proper implementation and realization of APP II activities and outcomes, and enhance learning and understanding of the PAX-APP accompaniment.

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South Sudan Council of Churches
Head Office

P.O. Box 209 - Juba, South Sudan.



Friday 10th 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 7th-10th 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, re-commits 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





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

SIGNED.

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 EADI 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 34th 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.





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27th January 2023

South Sudanese Women Clergy of the South Sudan Council of Churches and the South Sudan Islamic Council issue this statement in advance of the Ecumenical Pilgrimage of Peace of His Holiness Pope Francis, Archbishop Justin Welby and Moderator Iain Greenshields scheduled for the 3rd – 5th February 2023 in Juba, South Sudan. As we prayerfully anticipate this pilgrimage, **we urge the global ecumenical church leaders to persist in their demand for peace, justice and unity in South Sudan.**

Additionally, we acknowledge and recognize the efforts that have been undertaken by the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity to implement the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS). However, we urge the South Sudanese national leaders to diligently and timely implement the Roadmap of the R-ARCSS, and intentionally engage the non-signatories to the revitalized peace agreement, to ensure a smooth transition to a democratically elected government. We specifically urge them to:

1. **Prioritize the professionalization and deployment of the unified security sector forces** ensuring they are fully aware of their obligations to respect and protect all citizens regardless of ethnicity and gender; and fairly and justly discharge their responsibilities.
2. **Expedite the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) process.** DDR will facilitate the voluntary removal of small arms and light weapons which are used to perpetrate armed violence, sexual and gender-based violence, inter-clan and inter-ethnic conflicts.
3. **Establish, support and respect R-ARCSS chapter 4 institutions** like the Anti-corruption Commission, Women and Youth Enterprise Development Funds and the Economic and Financial Management Authority which are tasked with promoting accountable, efficient and equal revenue distribution.
4. **Expedite the establishment of the Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing,** and consider including representatives from the clergy in the Commission, and as key partners.
5. **Prioritize the reforms and the functions of the justice system** to provide justice and accountability for crimes like land grabbing and facilitate the effective functioning of the Gender Based Violence Court to prosecute crimes of rape and gendered violence.
6. **Provide professional security forces and engage community, women, inter-faith and development partners** in addressing the root causes of conflicts between farmers and migrating pastoralists, inter-clan and inter-ethnic conflicts, to find more permanent and lasting solutions.
7. **Provide security along the high-ways, roads and areas of recent fighting** including in Kajokeji, Kuda, Malakal, Mangalla, Morobo, Tombura, Tonj and Pibor.
8. **Prioritize critical service provision including education and healthcare.** Threats of privatization of public universities and health institutions risk rendering many unable to access essential services.
9. **Promote Freedom of Expression** where citizens can freely express themselves without fear of repercussion and the national leaders actively listen to the needs and concerns of the citizens.
10. **Protect the human rights and promote the dignity** of all citizens including addressing the needs of the internally displaced and the vulnerable.

Father James Oyot
General Secretary, South Sudan Council of Churches



Our main offices are located along Ministries Road, Juba-South Sudan. Visit our Social Media Platforms; Website; www.sscchurches.org | Twitter; @sscchurches | Face-book; South Sudan Council of Churches.
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