

South Sudan Crisis (Dec 2013--- Jan 2014)

Background paper

8.1.2014

Brief historical context

Two prolonged periods of conflict took place between 1955---1972 and 1983---2005 in which approximately 2.5 million people died¹ --- mostly civilians --- due to violence, starvation and drought. In 2005 these periods of violent conflict resulted in a series of peace talks, which finally resulted in a Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

As part of this agreement, the Sudanese government in Khartoum agreed to grant the south a six--- year period of autonomy, followed by a referendum allowing the people to decide if they were to secede from the large Sudanese state. The result of this referendum, held in January 2011, was a vote of 98% in favour of secession. Independence of the southern Sudanese state was realised on July 9, 2011.

Since independence, South Sudan has been in an intensive national building exercise, under the close monitoring of the international community, the United Nations, international financial organisations, NGOs, as well as the civilian population. South Sudan had a massive undertaking. It needed to both reconcile a population, most of whom had lived their entire lives in war or the verge of conflict, as well as to negotiate a fair distribution of resources with its former government to their north causing oil production to be shut down from January 2012. Subsequently, South Sudan has struggled to effectively build its governmental infrastructure, while also attempting to control rebel militia groups operating in its territory. Due to the aforementioned obstacles, the country's economic situation remains dire.

Re---Emerging Violence since December 2013

According to UNOCHA, violence began around December 15, 2013. As of January 7, 2014, the estimated number of people displaced since the outbreak of violence is over 200,000 and the estimated number of deaths exceeds 1000. Many have sought refuge at UN bases or have successfully crossed into neighbouring countries--- particularly, Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia. ²To date, the violence has affected five out of the 10 states of South Sudan namely, Central Equatoria, Jonglei, Unity, Lakes and Upper Nile.

Ceasefire talks continue with South Sudanese governmental representatives and various leaders of non---state parties in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Additionally, representative of both Sudan and South Sudan are in discussions regarding possible joint military action in the border regions, particularly in the oil fields, which are vulnerable to attacks that would potentially cause great economic losses.³

¹ <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the---world---factbook/geos/od.html>

² Map is public domain: <http://www.worldofmaps.net/en/africa/map---south---sudan/map---states---south---sudan.htm>

³ UNOCHA "South Sudan Crisis": Situation report numbers 7 and 8, published on 1 and 7 January 2014.

Churches in South Sudan and internationally have spoken strongly for peace. They have also emphasised that the conflict is of political nature and should not be portrayed as an ethnic conflict.⁴ Churches globally have joined the call of the churches for peace.⁵

Due to the escalating violence, many organisations have implemented evacuation protocol measures. Operations have been able to continue in some areas within the country, where the security situation has allowed it. Work has also continued from neighbouring countries, in which coordinated efforts to provide shelter and essential services are being made when possible. The escalating security situation makes this a daunting task and many people remain in great need of aid.

ACT Alliance Efforts

ACT Alliance is scaling up its relief operations and has launched four emergency appeals to address the humanitarian need in the region⁶. The appeals are preliminary and the response will be scaled up based on the developments and need.

In South Sudan with a US\$2.8m appeal, ACT members Norwegian Church Aid, World Renew and Dan Church Aid are helping internally displaced people and host communities access essential life-saving items, reduce vulnerability and realise safety and human dignity.

To address the influx of refugees within the region, the ACT forums in Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda are engaged in refugee response.

In Ethiopia, through a US\$2.3m appeal, ACT members the Lutheran World Federation and EOC---DICAC/IOCC are preparing to provide support in Lietchor, Tongo, Okugo and Pugnido refugee camps in the areas of water and sanitation, psychosocial support, food and non---food items, health and livelihoods. In Kenya, a US\$1.3m appeal will focus on the Kakuma refugee camp where ACT members the Lutheran World Federation and the National Council of Churches of Kenya are preparing to support reception facilities, water and sanitation equipment, child protection, camp planning and emergency education. In Uganda, a US\$488,407 appeal will assist ACT member the Lutheran World Federation in its response for refugees in the West Nile region and northwest Uganda regarding water, sanitation, refugee and host communities support and psychosocial support.

ACT Alliance has continuously called for a political resolution, protection of civilians and the immediate improvement of the security situation to allow for a proper response to the humanitarian need.

⁴ <http://www.unocha.org/south---sudan/> ⁴ <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/general---secretary/letters---received/south---sudan---church---leaders---letter> ⁵

⁵ <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/press---centre/news/wcc---calls---for---a---201cmandela---moment201d---in---south---sudan>

⁶ <http://www.actalliance.org/resources/appeals>



Our Ref:

Your Ref:

11th January 2014

LET MY PEOPLE LIVE IN PEACE AND HARMONY

STATEMENT OF THE SOUTH SUDANESE CHURCH ON THE CURRENT POLITICAL CRISIS AND VIOLENCE

"Oh Lord, be gracious to us, we wait for you. Be our arm every morning, our salvation in the time of trouble". Isa: 33:2.

"Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it" Ps.34:14.

Preamble:

We the South Sudanese Church, as the servants of God and of the people, and compelled by the Gospel imperative for peace and justice under the umbrella of South Sudan Council of Churches, hereby affirm our solid faith in God, our loving Father and in South Sudan, our beloved country.

Recalling our previous Pastoral messages;

-1999, Here we Stand United for Peace,

-2002, Let my People Choose,

-2010, Choose life: A vision for Peaceful Sudan.

We wholeheartedly believe that the human person is made in the image of God and endowed with inalienable dignity. Human life is sacred and therefore no one has the right to take it. (Exodus: 20:13).

We believe we are one nation and one people. We are all united by destiny, hope and faith regardless of our backgrounds. This nation is a precious gift

from God to all of us in our diversity. We should feel called individually and collectively to guard it jealously and commit ourselves to protect it from anyone bent on its destruction.

But we are deeply saddened by the recent outbreak of violence in our young and beloved country. We are shocked to see brothers and sisters killing one another. Those who together in unity of purpose struggled and laid down their lives for liberation exercise their democratic rights in national elections in 2010; who were united in heart and mind during the historic Referendum, 2011; and who joyfully celebrated the hard won independence on 9th July 2011; have now turned against one another in targeted and revenge killings. This is an abomination! We therefore express our condolences and sympathy to the families and Nation of South Sudan for the lives lost in this crisis.

We are deeply aggrieved to see our people flee their homes for fear of their own countrymen to get crammed into UN compounds or scattered into the bushes or forced to seek for refuge in neighbouring countries.

We are heart-broken to see what was purely a political problem in the ruling party, SPLM, quickly slides into an ethnic one on a rapid and frightening scale.

We recommit ourselves to work for peace in our country and send out this pastoral message,

Message to South Sudanese:

1. 1- We have committed offenses against ourselves and our communities, and we need to repent to God and to each other, we need to bring healing to ourselves and our communities. We are traumatized and in need of healing.
2. Desist from spreading rumours among the people and the communities in south Sudan.

Message to Warring Parties (SPLM/A)

In the light of the above, we call for:

- 1- Speedy and unconditional cessation of all hostilities everywhere in the country: we believe dialogue, is the best and the only

justifiable way to resolve grievances and outstanding issues between parties. Violence is not an option!

- 2- The SPLM to honour the trust and the privilege that God and the sovereign people of South Sudan have bestowed upon them to lead the Nation at this time; earnestly, and in good faith to resolve all political differences peacefully.
3. Both parties to the conflict and leaders to cease forthwith from mobilizing and encouraging their supporters/communities for further engagement in violence and destruction, and we urge both Parties to respect civilian lives within their combat areas.
4. Anyone who has violated the constitution of the Republic of South Sudan to be brought to justice, and for the government to ensure that the law expeditiously takes its course.
5. The government and the parties to the conflict to urgently open space corridors so that relief and other humanitarian assistance can reach those in need.
6. We urge the leaders from conflicting parties to speak the language of peace at all times. We believe that peace is not just made but it is also spoken in words and demonstrated in attitudes.

Message to, IGAD, African Union, UN and International Partners:

7. We appreciate IGAD, regional stakeholders and the International Community for their role in encouraging the conflicting parties to negotiate, and we call upon them to increase their efforts towards a speedy solution to the conflict.

Message to the Ecumenical Communities:

We acknowledge and appreciate the accompaniment of our ecumenical partners during the protracted civil war.

We now call upon our ecumenical partners to continue their role in supporting us by:

- 1- Promoting spaces and platforms through which South Sudanese will engage in dialogue for peace and reconciliation.
- 2- Mobilizing Act Alliance and CARITAS Networks to support humanitarian and relief work in South Sudan.
- 3- Advocate with their respective governments and inter-governmental bodies for support of Peace.

OUR COMMITMENT

We as the South Sudanese Church solemnly commit ourselves to:

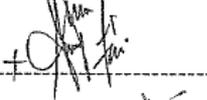
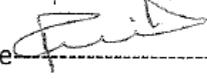
1. Continue to pray ceaselessly until the warring parties cease fire and end all hostilities
2. Back our prayers with action by rolling out a people to people peace process. We will mobilize our members to participate in ethnically mixed peace delegations to the villages and communities in the country. Peace building is first and foremost the responsibility and duty of the people of South Sudan.
3. To fight against negative ethnicity. God created us as members of diverse ethnic communities but leaders use their respective ethnic identities to sow hatred and divide the people along ethnic lines. This tendency must be resisted by all means.
4. To build on the outcome of this day of prayer by convening a stakeholders conference to reason together and reach a national consensus on the South Sudan we want. Sovereignty belongs to the people and not to individual leaders or political parties. Hence the voice of the people is critically important in determining the political destiny of our beloved country.
5. To actively participate in nation building, including a people based constitution making process that will lay the foundation on which peace dividends will be realized for all of our people.
6. Join hands with our ecumenical partners and the friends of South Sudan so that in the spirit of Pan-Africans we shall contribute to good neighbourliness and African solutions to African problems.

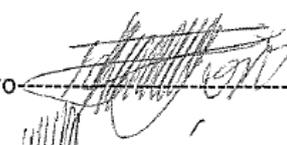
Conclusion:

God in your Grace forgive us our sins and bless us with enduring peace in this New Year, 2014 and beyond. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, and invoke our National Anthem: Oh God, bless South Sudan... Amen.



Signed:

- 1- ArchBishop Paulino Lokudu Loro-----CC-----Signature 
- 2- ArchBishop Daniel Deng Bul-----ECSSS-----Signature 
- 3- Bishop Arkanjelo Wani Lemi-----AIC-----Signature 
- 4- Rev Phillip Akwei- Obang-----SSPEC-----Signature 

- 5- Rev Nassir Francis Luka-----PCOSS-----Signature 
- 6- Bishop Dr. Isiaiah Majok Dau-----SPC-----Signature 
- 7- Bishop Micheal Taban Toro-----SSCC Chairman. 
- 8- Rev Mark Akech Cien-----Acting General Secretary 