



Our Ref:

Your Ref:

Date: Friday 9th June 2017.

**PASTORAL MESSAGE OF HOPE FROM SOUTH SUDAN
COUNCIL OF CHURCHES (SSCC)**

“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” (Jeremiah 29:11).

We the Heads of the Member Churches of the South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC), meeting in Entebbe on 8th June 2017, have just returned from a three-day Ecumenical Solidarity Pastoral Visit to some of our people who have taken refuge in Uganda from the horrific violence in our own country, with further solidarity visits to come as we implement our Action Plan for Peace (APP). We are grateful to our Ecumenical family who accompanied us on this journey, including Uganda Joint Christian Council (UJCC), Council of Anglican Provinces of Africa (CAPA), Fellowship of Christian Churches in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa (FECCLAHA), All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), and Lambeth Palace.

We have listened to our brothers, sisters and children in the settlements who recounted what forced them out of South Sudan and of the life they are now experiencing. People who grew up as refugees have been forced to become refugees once again. The world needs to hear their heart-breaking stories: that they struggle to provide sufficient food for their families; that children who are desperate for education cannot access it; that health facilities are inadequate; that terrible crimes have been committed against women and children. The ethnic conflict within the camps and tensions with surrounding communities as a result of pressures on resources rise everyday that the needs of both refugees and host communities are not met. We are grateful to the humanitarian organisations who have done so much for our people, yet the shortfall continues. We plead passionately with the international community to enhance their efforts to address these needs and honour their pledges where applicable.

The refugees have a huge trust in the Church, that the Church will do something. As shepherds, we experience the suffering of our people, their pain is our pain, and it propels us to work towards peace. They cry to us to share their pain and suffering with the warring factions.

We as the Church Leaders are united in calling on the warring factions - and all those whose action and inaction such as the proliferation of arms have contributed to this tragic and senseless situation - to please take note of their plight and to put an end to this. We call for an immediate cessation of hostilities and a halt to the atrocities which are being committed. We call for the needs of the people to be prioritised over personal and political interests. We must create an environment for good governance, where all leaders are held accountable to the people they represent.

We call on the international community to speak and act as one, in favour of a peaceful resolution to this conflict. We call on regional leaders to continue to do everything within their power to end conflict and help us to build a peaceful nation. We believe that the scale of the problem is such that there will not be one single party that can resolve this, but we must all come together in the spirit of peace.

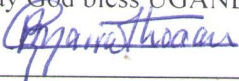


While the Church endorses the principle of dialogue for a peaceful resolution to the conflict, we continue to call that such a process must be inclusive and a number of basic criteria must be met. As the Church we will continue to promote our South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC) Action Plan for Peace (APP) and through this we will reach across the nation and across borders to provide hope and guidance towards peace.

We express in the strongest terms our gratitude to the People of Uganda for their generosity and compassion. In a world where migrants are becoming increasingly unwelcome almost everywhere, Uganda shines out as a beacon of hope and of Gospel values: "For I was hungry and you gave me food...I was a stranger and you welcomed me..." (Matthew 25: 35 ff).

Even in this bleak situation, we as the Church will not stop working for peace. Our hope is in the deliverance that God will bring. "Nothing shall separate us from the love of God, in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Roman 8:35).

May God bless UGANDA, SOUTH SUDAN, and AFRICA.



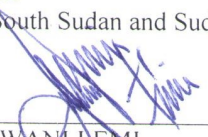
Rt. Rev. Moderator Peter GAI LUAL MARROW
Chairman - South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC)



Archbishop Paulino LUKUDU LORO
Metropolitan Archbishop of JUBA - Catholic Church.



Archbishop Dr Daniel DENG BUL YAK
Archbishop and Primate
Episcopal Church of South Sudan and Sudan (ECSS/S).



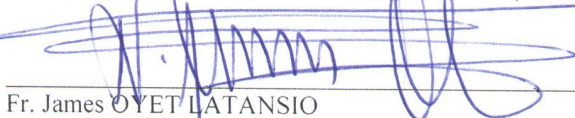
Bishop Dr Arkangelo WANI LEMI
Presiding Bishop - Africa Inland Church (AIC).



Bishop Dr Isaiah MAJOK DAU
General Overseer - Sudan Pentecostal Church (SPC).



Rev. Moderator Alex GABRIEL LADU LUNGAJU
Moderator - Equatoria Presbytery
Presbyterian Church of South Sudan and Sudan (PCSS/S)



Fr. James OYET LATANSIO
General Secretary - South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC).

