



SSCBS – JUBA

South Sudan Catholic Bishops' Secretariat
P.O. Box 258 – Juba
South Sudan

LET THE CRY FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE OF THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH SUDAN BE LISTENED TO AND RESPECTED

We, the Catholic Bishops and Ordinaries of South Sudan, meeting in Juba on 17th and 18th October 2019, in the presence of the Papal Charge d'Affaires Monsignor Mark Kadima, have reflected prayerfully on the state of our nation as we approach the deadline for the formation of the Reconstituted Transitional Government of National Unity (R-TGoNU) on 12th November 2019. We address this urgent call for peace and justice to the leaders and the people of South Sudan along with our regional and international friends.

There has been a national dialogue process and a report has been issued which highlights the concerns of the ordinary citizens of South Sudan. The people have spoken; let their voice be heard and respected. Let their wishes be implemented.

Our focus is not on politics but on the dignity of every human person. As we look around our dioceses and see the continued suffering of the IDPs, people in POCs and refugees, a humanitarian tragedy which is made worse by the breakdown of the economy and the continued violence in some areas, our hearts are touched. We repeat our call in our previous messages that this is a senseless and morally unjustifiable war and that all violence must stop immediately and unconditionally.

We question why the focus of peace efforts is on power-sharing between two or more individuals rather than addressing the root causes of the conflicts which are affecting the ordinary people of South Sudan, including issues of governance, violence, poverty, lack of basic services, corruption, national identity, and conflict within and between communities over resources, land, pasture, water and cattle. The conflict must not be personalised between President Salva Kiir and Dr Riek Machar, and a few other elite leaders. The people must be at the centre.

While we are grateful for the peace efforts of our neighbours in IGAD and our friends in the international community, we remain aware of their economic interests which may undermine their impartiality. Let them focus on ending the suffering of the people of South Sudan.

We hope that a new transitional government will be formed soon, but we stress that the formation of a government is not an end in itself. A new government will only have legitimacy if it resolves the conflict and provides peace, justice, security, basic services and good governance for the people. We are particularly concerned about the failure to agree on the number and boundaries of the states, which is already causing conflict in some areas, and on the failure to create a new, integrated, unified, well-trained, disciplined, professional army (along with other organised forces and the national security service). We encourage the parties to implement these within the few days remaining before 12th November, but we fear a repetition of the violence of 2016 if these are not adequately addressed. We support the formation of the R-TGoNU only when essential preconditions have been met, and only if it is truly inclusive, including non-signatories to the R-ARCSS.

As pastors we are concerned about the level of fear within the leadership of all our parties, a fear which has spread to many of our communities. Let it not lead to a toxic shame which results in denial and cover ups. Let there be accountability for the violence and corruption which has destroyed our country. Above all, let our leaders remember the love and humility of our Holy Father Pope Francis when he kissed their feet. Is his unprecedented gesture to be wasted? Forgiveness is always possible, but it demands repentance.

We commend our country's efforts to broker peace talks between the government and armed groups in Sudan, following the nonviolent overthrow of Omar Hassan al Bashir. "Blessed are the peacemakers" (Matthew 5:9). May we learn a lesson from our Sudanese sisters and brothers about the value and success of nonviolence. However as we help our neighbours to make peace, let us renew our efforts to bring peace to our own country, and challenge ourselves with the words of Jesus: "Why do you observe the splinter in your brother's eye and never notice the great log in your own?" (Matthew 7:3). We appeal to the people and leaders of both nations to bring about true and lasting peace.

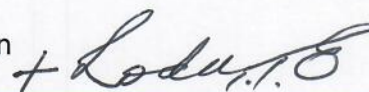
We pray for our nation. We pray for the suffering citizens who are being denied their right to peace, justice and prosperity. We pray for those with guns who are being manipulated into violence. We pray for the leaders, who are also our sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, part of our pastoral flock, that they may gain the courage to overcome their fear and not be ashamed, to repent of their failures and to humbly and selflessly lead our nation to lasting peace.

Given this 18th day of October 2019 in Juba, South Sudan.

His Grace, Archbishop Paolino Lukudu Loro
Metropolitan Archbishop of Juba, Chairman SSCBS
Catholic Archdiocese of Juba

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His Lordship, Bishop Erkolano Lodu Tombe
Catholic Diocese of Yei, and President of Caritas South Sudan

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His Lordship Bishop Stephen Ameyu Martin
Catholic Diocese of Torit,



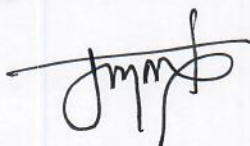
His Lordship Bishop Stephen Nyodho Ador
Catholic Diocese of Malakal



His Lordship Bishop Santo L. Pio
Auxiliary Bishop,
Catholic Archdiocese of Juba

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Monsignor John Mathiyang Machol
Administrator,
Catholic Diocese of Rumbek



Monsignor Marco Mangu Adillio
Administrator,
Catholic Diocese of Wau



His Lordship Paride Taban
Bishop Emeritus
Catholic Diocese of Torit

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