SOUTH SUDAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES
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مجلس الكنائس جنوب السودان
مكتب الرئاسة
ص – ب ٢٠٩ جوبا – جنوب السودان

Our Ref: Your Ref:

JUBA, 26th May 2015

STATEMENT FROM THE SOUTH SUDAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES (SSCC) ON THE DETERIORATING SITUATION IN SOUTH SUDAN

South Sudanese Church leaders note with concern the deteriorating situation in our beloved nation at this time. Both SSCC and individual churches have made many statements calling for an end to this senseless conflict, the first one on 17th December 2013, just two days after the crisis began. There is no moral justification for the killing to continue. It is unacceptable for negotiations about power and positions to take place in luxury hotels while people are still killing and being killed. Many agreements have been signed, but none have been implemented.

However our words have not been heeded. We challenge the military and political leaders of all sides, most of whom call themselves Christians: why are you not listening to the voice of your Church leaders, who echo the voice of the ordinary citizens of South Sudan?

We seriously doubt whether this new statement will be heeded by our leaders, but nevertheless we want them, along with the citizens of South Sudan and our friends in the region and the international community, to know that we are watching and we are aware of what is happening. It is important for us to speak truth to power, even if those in power ignore the truth.

- There has been an upsurge of fighting between the government and opposition in many parts of the country recently, despite the many cessations of hostilities agreements which they have signed.
- The economic situation in the country is deteriorating very rapidly, leading to hardship for the ordinary citizens.
- National assets are being destroyed. The oil fields do not belong either to the government or the opposition; they belong to the people. Any party which is sincere in its desire to govern South Sudan for the good of the people should be protecting these important national assets, not destroying them.
- Human rights are being abused at every level, both on the battlefield and in peaceful areas. People are being killed, raped and tortured. Children are being recruited into armed groups. Looting is endemic. People are being arrested for no reason. Security organs appear to be acting as if they are above the law. The space for citizens and civil society to speak out appears to be narrowing.
- The humanitarian situation is deteriorating. Once again our rich and fertile land which should be the bread basket of Africa is relying on foreign aid.
- Separate from the main conflict between government and opposition, we see an increasing militarisation of society, with new armed groups springing up and with an increase in conflicts between and within local communities.
- All of this leads us to conclude that much of the country is without effective governance. Many individuals, groups and even government organs thus feel they must take the law into their own hands, with disastrous consequences for everybody.

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South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC) wishes to serve notice that the churches will not sit idle. If our statements are not heeded, we will take more proactive steps to try to achieve peace and reconciliation for the people of South Sudan. Any long term solution to the conflict must take account of the needs of the ordinary people, not the agenda of the political and military elite.

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