

SOUTH SUDAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

Head Office

P.O Box 209 - Juba, South Sudan



مجلس الكنائس جنوب السودان

مكتب الرئاسة

ص - ب ٢٠٩ جوبا - جنوب السودان



Your Ref:

22nd March 2016

EASTER MESSAGE OF HOPE IN THE RESURRECTION

The Season of Lent draws to a close, and the great Christian Feast of Easter approaches starting with Holy Week of the Passion. It is the central feast of the Christian calendar. Christ conquered hardship and detention, betrayal and torture, pain and suffering, he conquered sin and he conquered death, and he rose again to new life. Easter is the ultimate expression of hope triumphing over times of darkness and despair. Jesus himself faced darkness ("If it is possible, let this cup pass me by!" - Matthew 26:39) and despair ("My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" - Matthew 27:46) but from suffering and death came new life and new hope in the Resurrection. Jesus Christ, the Risen Lord is our hope in the midst of suffering and death; he is the one who leads us to new life.

We ask ourselves, why are we still experiencing suffering and death in our country, more than two years after this senseless conflict broke out, eight months after the signing of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (ARCSS), and after we ourselves and many other people of good will have been consistently calling for an end to the killing? Why are our Leaders not listening to our pleas for Peace? Why are our soldiers and young men continuing to obey orders to kill their brothers and sisters? Why are the fires of tribalism still being stoked? Why is the greed and self-interest of certain individuals and groups still dominating the narrative in our nation? Where are the Leaders who will put the good of the nation, of children, women and men of all communities, above their own narrow interests? Truly, our nation has not yet experienced the joy of the Resurrection; we are still in Lent, experiencing suffering and death.

We wish to express our concern about three particular issues:

Firstly, the economy of our country, which has been deteriorating for many months, is close to complete collapse. Key stakeholders, including civil servants, police and army, need to be paid, and we fear the instability and insecurity that may ensue if they are not paid. At the same time ordinary citizens can barely survive due to the decrease in value of the South Sudanese Pound and the subsequent increase in prices of essential commodities. This economic failure is not a random act of God; it is a direct result of the conflict, which is destroying our country. We urge our leaders to stop the conflict and form the TGoNU to begin to deal with the economic crisis. If you genuinely don't know how to address the issue, then be honest about it and call for assistance from the international community, not simply to bail us out with cash but to help you manage the economy in such a way that it will recover. There can be no empty appeals to "sovereignty" when we are in such desperate straits. A sovereign government has the duty to bring peace, security, stability and prosperity to its people. If you can't do that, then you must call for help from those who can.

Secondly, the Transitional Government of National Unity (TGoNU) has still not been formed. We urge both parties to form the TGoNU immediately, even if all the preconditions have not been fully met. The people of South Sudan cannot accept any further delays over petty political considerations while our brothers and sisters are still dying and our economy is collapsing.

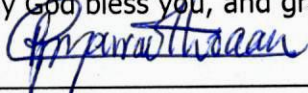
Our country is in limbo while we wait for the government, which has been promised to us by all main parties when they signed the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (ARCSS). Dr Riek MACHAR, our son and our parishioner, we urge you to come to Juba and take up your position as First Vice President. You cannot govern South Sudan from PAGAK or Addis Ababa; come and take your rightful place in Juba. Your Excellency President Salva KIIR MAYARDIT, also our son and our parishioner, we urge you to welcome your brother in Christ Dr Riek MACHAR to Juba and remove any remaining obstacles to the formation of the TGoNU. You can no longer govern South Sudan alone after signing the ARCSS; you need your First Vice President.

Thirdly, we are aware that the subsistence economy of our rural brothers and sisters has often helped us through economic hard times in the past. While they can still rely on their crops and their livestock, the situation is not hopeless. However we are now concerned at the humanitarian crisis which is affecting many parts of our country. Conflict, displacement and weather conditions have combined to severely reduce the resources available to our people. This problem must be addressed.

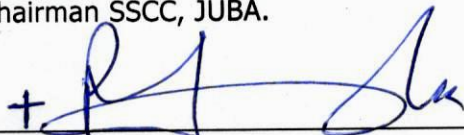
We repeat our Statement of Intent issued in Kigali in June 2015. We will no longer simply make statements and then stand idly by while our Leaders ignore our advice. The South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC) is now beginning to operationalize our three-pronged programme for Advocacy, Neutral Forums and Reconciliation. Through Advocacy we will begin to change the narrative from one of conflict to one of peace, and to influence the policies of government and parties, nationally, regionally and internationally. Through our Neutral Forums we will bring together stakeholders to discuss the root causes of the conflict and to envision the future of our nation, to find an indigenous South Sudanese resolution to our problems. Building on the successful methodologies of the People to People Peace Process (WUNLIT) and the Church-led Independent Committee for National Healing, Peace and Reconciliation, we will launch a grassroots consultation and reconciliation process which will last not for one or two years but for one or two decades. We again give public notice that, following many months of behind the scenes preparations; these programmes are about to be rolled out.

We will play our part in bringing the Easter Hope of new life to South Sudan after our Lenten period of suffering and death. We call upon every South Sudanese citizen, particularly our leaders but also every individual woman, man and child, particularly those who are carrying guns and killing their brothers and sisters, to join us in that endeavour. We also call upon all people of good will, in our region, in Africa and in the world, to join us. May the Easter Hope turn into Easter Joy for all of us in the Republic of South Sudan.

May God bless you, and grant you a HAPPY EASTER.



Rt. Rev. Moderator Peter GAI LUAL
Chairman SSCC, JUBA.



Archbishop Paulino LUKUDU LORO
Metropolitan Archbishop
Catholic Church (CC) JUBA.

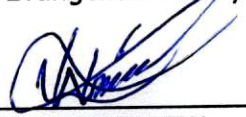



Archbishop Dr Daniel DENG BUL
Primate and Archbishop
Episcopal Church of South Sudan/Sudan (ECSS/S) JUBA.

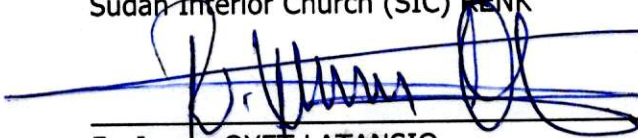

Bishop Dr Arkanjelo WANI LEMI
Presiding Bishop Africa Inland Church (AIC) JUBA.


Bishop Dr Isaiah MAJAK DAU
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Rt. Rev. Moderator James PAR TAP THON
South Sudan Evangelical Presbyterian Church (SSEPC) JUBA.


Rev. James KUONG NINREW
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