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مجلس كنائس جنوب السودان
المكتب الرئيسي
ص - ب ٢٠٩ جوبا - جنوب السودان

Friday 9th July 2021

SOUTH SUDAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES
A Message of Hope Declaring the Second Decade of South Sudan's Independence as a Period of a New Beginning of Peace, Justice, Freedom and Prosperity for all our People.

"... For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime! Weeping may last through the night, but joy comes with the morning." (Psalm 30:5).

We, the people of South Sudan in all our diversities, both at home and abroad united in celebrating the historic attainment of the independence of our beloved Country, the Republic of South Sudan on 9th July 2011. The world descended on Juba, to celebrate with us! There was euphoria and triumphalism marking the birth of the World's Newest Nation, the Republic of South Sudan. We hoped that we had finally arrived the promised land after decades of struggles and selfless sacrifices for a better country. As stated in the Text of the Declaration of our Independence, the selfless sacrifices of our martyrs, heroes and heroines were for *"the cause of justice, freedom and prosperity for our people"*. On this day ten years ago, we expected a new ray of hope, optimism and reign of sustainable peace with prosperity. However, those jubilations and celebrations were short-lived as the nation in just a span of two years descended into violent conflicts that have devastated all aspects of South Sudanese lives. Painfully, millions of our citizens, who were hopeful and jubilant on this day ten years ago, were suddenly impoverished, made hopeless and reduced to extreme dependence on humanitarian assistance.

As We mark ten (10) years of our independence today, with pains in our hearts, there is little to celebrate. It is truly a difficult time and experience for us, the people of South Sudan. Our hearts continue to groan with pain, anguish, turmoil, despair, and misery as lives are lost every day in every corner of our country. Conflict has become the context in which we are evolving with rampant proxy inter-communal violence, increasing cases of sexual violence, revenge killings, land grabbing and child abduction. These protracted armed conflicts have not only destabilized our peace but have also retarded the socio-economic development of our country. These conflicts have rendered our first ten years of independence, "a wasted decade". We are at a standstill in many ways!

The Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) signed in 2018, was the most viable framework for peace and a beacon of hope for South Sudanese. Unfortunately, it's slow and inconsistent implementation is very worrying and shattering all hopes to restore stability through this Peace Agreement; and there appears to be a lack of political will. In the reality of this uncertainty, *"The Church of the living God, which is the pillar and foundation of Truth" (1 Timothy 3:15)* and Reconciliation, has continued to stand strong with the people of South Sudan in advocating for sustainable Peace, Justice, Healing, Forgiveness and Reconciliation in the land. We shall continue to urge all the parties to the Revitalized Agreement to implement this agreement, embrace peace, cease violence and resolve differences through peaceful means. We also urge the non-signatories to continue in

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the path of dialogue with the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity (R-TGoNU) to achieve sustainable peace for the people of South Sudan facilitated by the Community of Sant'Egidio in Rome.

With collective efforts and responsibility from all Citizens, Political Parties, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and indeed all sectors of our society, in the country, the glimmer of hope and optimism that the nation exhibited on the day of independence ten years ago can still be rekindled.

On this occasion of commemorating the first decade of our independence, the South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC), declares the Second Decade of South Sudan's Independence as a period of a new beginning of Peace, Justice, Freedom, Forgiveness, Reconciliation and Prosperity for all our people. It must not be another lost decade! It is an opportunity to rescue our people from imposed destitution and sustain their livelihoods. In this second decade, we must stop the self-sabotage of our collective future and prosperity. We must reflect on what went wrong in the first decade after independence, learn from those experiences and rise to the collective responsibility of this generation to deliver our country from its current predicaments. Never again shall our people be merciless victims of our own hands!

We call on our brothers and sisters in the Global Ecumenical Church Fellowship, the International and Development Partners and friends of South Sudan, who stood with us in our difficult years of the struggle for our independence, not to abandon us in our journey of the next ten years. We must continue to work together for that will set our country on a new course - a course that leaves no one behind. Together we can have a peaceful South Sudan for all our citizens. *Faith, Hope, and Love will drive us forward and sustain us in this noble task (cf.1 Corinthians 13:13).* We shall overcome some day. We make this declaration in the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit! And together we say: Oh God bless South Sudan.

SIGNED:

Rt. Rev. James PAR TAP HON, Chairman South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC).

The Most Rev. Dr. Stephen AMEYU MARTIN, Metropolitan Archbishop of JUBA & Apostolic Administrator.

The Most Rev. Dr. Justin BADI ARAMA, Primate of the Episcopal Church of South Sudan (ECSS).

Rt. Rev. Bishop Dr. Isaiah MAJOK DAU, General Overseer, Sudan Pentecostal Church (SPC).

Rt. Rev. Bishop James LAGOS ALEXANDER, Presiding Bishop, Africa Inland Church (AIC).

Rt. Rev. Moderator James MAKUEI CHUOL
Moderator of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Church of South Sudan and Sudan (PCSS/S).

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