



The Ecumenical Network on South Sudan (ENSS) Joint Statement

Ecumenical Pilgrimage of the Pope, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Moderator of the Church of Scotland, for Love, Hope, Peace, Justice, Forgiveness, Reconciliation and Unity, February 2023

"I pray that all may be one" (Jn 17)

As South Sudan celebrates the upcoming ecumenical pilgrimage of the Pope, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Moderator of the Church of Scotland, we, members of the Ecumenical Network on South Sudan, and the South Sudan Council of Churches, join them in their prayer for unity that "all may be one" (John 17) across South Sudan.

We pray that the leaders of the Anglican, Catholic, Presbyterian and Evangelical churches will embody the spirit of this historic pilgrimage for love, hope, peace, justice, forgiveness, reconciliation, and unity, with the support of the Church worldwide, and raise up the people of South Sudan during this pilgrimage. The commitments made between these leaders, and leaders within South Sudan's Presidency, at the retreat in Rome in 2019, paved the way to this pilgrimage, and those bold and courageous commitments frame the future path to peace, and must endure.

The Ecumenical Network on South Sudan walks alongside the South Sudan Council of Churches as it facilitates the coming together of church leaders and supports the unity of the Church in South Sudan across denominations, and political and ethnic divides - a unity which may help us envision an increasingly unified South Sudan.

We note the multiple challenges on the path to holistic peace, unity, justice, and reconciliation, including the impact of poverty, climate change, Covid-19 and conflict.

Peace: Implementation of the peace agreement, the Roadmap to the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) faces continued delays. We welcome the recent finalisation of the unification of forces but cannot ignore the escalation in the frequency and intensity of armed conflicts and inter communal violence, as witnessed particularly in the last few months of 2022 in Upper Nile State and parts of Central Equatoria. Political divisions have exacerbated this. Disunity within key signatories to the peace agreement must be healed, or risk continuing to cast a veil of ambiguity over the agreement. We welcomed the glimmer of hope in April as the SPLM and SPLM-IO agreed on a quota for leadership within the national security structures. We call on all parties, signatories and non-signatories to the R-ARCSS, to end the violence and deepen their dialogue to ensure that conflicts are resolved through nonviolent means.

Unity: While the Transitional National Legislative Assembly has been established, we welcome the Presidency's affirmation that South Sudan's first ever elections will take place. South Sudan needs free and fair elections to support implementation of the peace agreement. This is even more critical as political tensions and violence have escalated, and civil society remains alarmed by restrictions in civic space and the increase in detention and harassment this past year. We note that much needs to be achieved to ensure that the apparatus for elections is put in place.

Justice: We call for a renewal of the mandate of the UN Human Rights Commission on South Sudan and call on all relevant parties to engage effectively in full and fair investigations led by the Commission



during this critical year, which is essential to underpin any future capacity support. We call for concrete steps to be taken to establish the Hybrid Court in the coming year. Alongside this, transparency in revenues, including oil, and the use of those revenues, must be redoubled through concrete measures engaging the legislature and the Ministry of Finance. This is essential to ensure improved access to quality basic services and vital infrastructure.

Reconciliation, and preventing further conflict: We welcome the on-going consultations for the Commission on Truth, Healing and Reconciliation, and we renew our call for a nation-wide and systemic approach to peacebuilding and reconciliation, so critical to address the trauma that continues to divide, and to prevent further conflict. It is clear that investment in nation-wide and multi-level reconciliation is now a life-saving action. We must build from existing community level agreements, ensure we invest in both reaction to hotspot areas where there is an escalation in violence, and in the recovery of these areas which is so critical to the sustainability of these agreements. Throughout, this requires systematic and in-depth engagement of youth and women, to ensure that they can be more meaningfully engaged in peace processes, and not only in the implementation of the R-ARCSS.

It is likely that 9.4 million people will be in need of humanitarian assistance in 2023 – over 70% of the whole population of South Sudan. Communities are still recovering from conflict, Covid and multiple years of flooding, with household assets and coping mechanisms depleted. Yet attention and resources are being diverted from South Sudan, partly due to UN scale-ups in quick succession for Afghanistan, Ethiopia, and Ukraine. The need for anticipatory action is clear in communities experiencing “crisis” levels of food insecurity, yet we see a depletion in aid in these areas due to scarce resources being moved to areas with emergency and famine levels. We call for governments worldwide to renew their focus on South Sudan, ensure they both retain resources for those that are in food crisis, try to prevent further deterioration, and increase support to those on the verge of facing catastrophe or extreme food insecurity. With the climate crisis a significant driver of food insecurity, we also call on governments to implement without delay the commitments made at COP26 and COP27 UN climate summits.

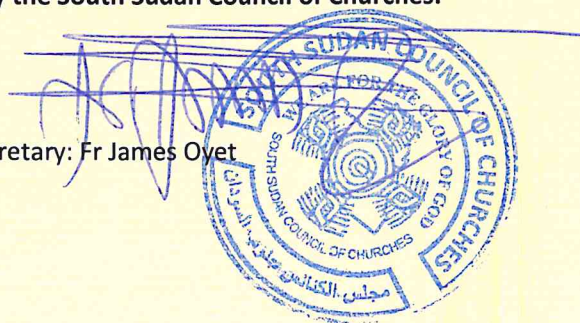
The Ecumenical Network on South Sudan joins church leaders from across South Sudan. Along with them, we pledge to continue our efforts to help bring about a lasting “just peace” in South Sudan through our support to spiritual renewal, advocacy, dialogue, reconciliation, and trauma healing, while encouraging all non-violent means to bringing this positive change in society.

With the committed support of the international community, we must redouble our humanitarian, peacebuilding and diplomatic efforts. Further suffering can be prevented if action is taken now, turning our attention away from this will cost lives and fast.

Despite these setbacks, decades of marginalisation, bitter conflict, and fear and oppression, we are committed to redoubling our efforts in support of the people of South Sudan, and our common hope for a united and peaceful nation remains as firm as ever. We call for our brothers and sisters in the global Church, in the Church across South Sudan, and for governments worldwide to turn their attention to South Sudan during this historical pilgrimage and join us in strengthening efforts and resources to support the people of South Sudan in their work of renewal and transformation, as they restore hope and continue to build a peaceful, just and thriving nation.

Endorsed by the South Sudan Council of Churches:

General Secretary: Fr James Oyet



Endorsed by members of the Ecumenical Network on South Sudan:



AACC-CETA

Brot
für die Welt



Diakonie 
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NORWEGIAN CHURCH AID
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World Vision 




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IN PARTNERSHIP



Christian Council of Norway
CHURCHES TOGETHER



 THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
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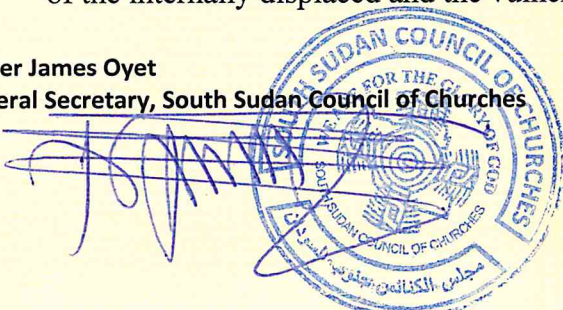
27th January 2023

South Sudanese Women Clergy of the South Sudan Council of Churches and the South Sudan Islamic Council issue this statement in advance of the Ecumenical Pilgrimage of Peace of His Holiness Pope Francis, Archbishop Justin Welby and Moderator Iain Greenshields scheduled for the 3rd – 5th February 2023 in Juba, South Sudan. As we prayerfully anticipate this pilgrimage, **we urge the global ecumenical church leaders to persist in their demand for peace, justice and unity in South Sudan.**

Additionally, we acknowledge and recognize the efforts that have been undertaken by the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity to implement the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS). However, we urge the South Sudanese national leaders to diligently and timely implement the Roadmap of the R-ARCSS, and intentionally engage the non-signatories to the revitalized peace agreement, to ensure a smooth transition to a democratically elected government. We specifically urge them to:

1. **Prioritize the professionalization and deployment of the unified security sector forces** ensuring they are fully aware of their obligations to respect and protect all citizens regardless of ethnicity and gender; and fairly and justly discharge their responsibilities.
2. **Expedite the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) process.** DDR will facilitate the voluntary removal of small arms and light weapons which are used to perpetrate armed violence, sexual and gender-based violence, inter-clan and inter-ethnic conflicts.
3. **Establish, support and respect R-ARCSS chapter 4 institutions** like the Anti-corruption Commission, Women and Youth Enterprise Development Funds and the Economic and Financial Management Authority which are tasked with promoting accountable, efficient and equal revenue distribution.
4. **Expedite the establishment of the Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing,** and consider including representatives from the clergy in the Commission, and as key partners.
5. **Prioritize the reforms and the functions of the justice system** to provide justice and accountability for crimes like land grabbing and facilitate the effective functioning of the Gender Based Violence Court to prosecute crimes of rape and gendered violence.
6. **Provide professional security forces and engage community, women, inter-faith and development partners** in addressing the root causes of conflicts between farmers and migrating pastoralists, inter-clan and inter-ethnic conflicts, to find more permanent and lasting solutions.
7. **Provide security along the high-ways, roads and areas of recent fighting** including in Kajokeji, Kuda, Malakal, Mangalla, Morobo, Tombura, Tonj and Pibor.
8. **Prioritize critical service provision including education and healthcare.** Threats of privatization of public universities and health institutions risk rendering many unable to access essential services.
9. **Promote Freedom of Expression** where citizens can freely express themselves without fear of repercussion and the national leaders actively listen to the needs and concerns of the citizens.
10. **Protect the human rights and promote the dignity** of all citizens including addressing the needs of the internally displaced and the vulnerable.

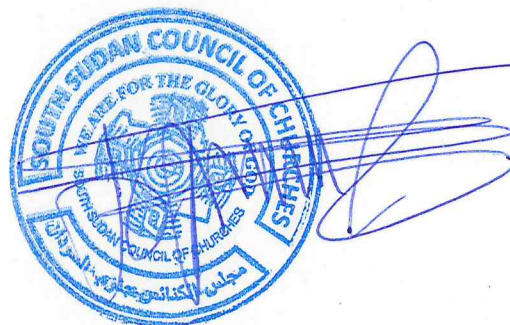
Father James Oyot
General Secretary, South Sudan Council of Churches





Key Advocacy Messages from Church Leaders (SSCC)

- This visit must **melt the mistrust** and lack of confidence that is dwelling in the hearts of the political leaders
- The political leaders must commit that the country will **not return to war** - welfare of the people must be at heart.
- The **R-ARCSS must have full commitment**, and the transitional period must be delivered diligently:
 - *Accelerate the process of finalizing constitution and holding the general elections as scheduled in December 2024*
 - *Establish Commission for Truth, Healing and Reconciliation.*
 - *Continue engagement with non-signatories to the R-ARCSS*
- There should be sufficient **safe civil society space** for citizens to express their needs and views without fear.
- There should be a **commitment to elections education** in country
- In reference to particular key issues in country:
 - Prevalence of **gender-based violence** - all actors to commit to **zero tolerance of sexual violence**, and to hold perpetrators and enablers to account.
 - **Humanitarian situation** - call on the international community to **not forget South Sudan and commit to more funding.**
 - **Climate Change Impact** - South Sudanese on the forefront of climate crisis, facing floods and droughts. International community to **better commit to tackling this shared problem.**



Fr James Oyet Latansio - Secretary General, South Sudan Council of Churches