

For immediate release

January 27th 2014

A statement by Civil Society Organizations for lasting Peace in South Sudan

“It is all our collective responsibility to restore peace, build confidence, raise civil consciousness and to put the new nation to an inclusive, transparent and sustainable path”

We would like to extend special thanks and congratulations to the government of South Sudan (GRSS), the SPLM/A in the opposition and the peace negotiators for an agreement on cessation of hostilities and the status of the political detainees. It is our prayer that the implementation takes immediate effect and that all parties abide by it.

The December 15th 2013 incident caused huge impact on civilian lives and property. Those innocent lives were meant to be the future leaders, academics, doctors, nurses, teachers, engineers etc with their personal aspirations for this nation. Those innocent lives were all keen to contribute to the nation building in South Sudan, but are no more.

It is therefore crucial that all leaders and citizens in this country to recall that the 50-year long civil war that ended in 2005 through the Comprehensive Peace Agreement between southern Sudan and Sudan was only made possible through inclusive dialogue and not by war.

Today, we recall the long and heroic struggle enshrined in our constitution that identify for justice, freedom, equality and dignity; we also contemplate what lies ahead in post-independence in terms of peace, development and security, which amounts to an enormous task.

The referendum results of 9th 2011, in which the people of southern Sudan established to the world through a peaceful, fair, free and transparent process that they have opted to secede from the north. This was demonstrated through a landslide victory of 99.57% for an independent South Sudan.

Today's conflict seems compromise that position because it has been the hope of south Sudanese that after the independence of their beloved country in 2011, that they begin to see and realize the fruits of the long walk to freedom; To live in peace, safety, dignity and in a society where values of human dignity, democracy and equal rights are upheld.

Therefore, to this end we urge all and call upon the government to work expeditiously with all stakeholders in doing the following:

For the interim:

1. The leadership of the government of Republic of South Sudan and the SPLM/A in Opposition should take responsibility to come out and apologize to the citizens for the loss of lives, sufferings and destruction of property caused by violence since 15th of December 2013.
2. The South Sudan Human Rights Commission and all those concern with human rights issues should work with all relevant stakeholders to expeditiously undertake an audit of the violence and present the findings to parliament and the wider public very soon with a framework for ensuring justice for the victims.
3. The Government of Republic of South Sudan and SPLM/A in Opposition they should agree on framework of a locally instituted, independent and competent tribunal that should undertake the trial of the perpetrators and suspects of crimes committed during the conflict.

4. Both parties to observe, respect and implement the agreement on cessation of hostilities. The civil society should be included in the monitoring of these agreements.
5. The Government of the Republic of South Sudan to come together with the UNMISS, humanitarian agencies and local leaders to discuss and resolve the current limitations and challenges hampering the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the affected areas.
6. Special support for the conflict prone and devastated states (Jonglei, Unity and Upper Nile states) is set up.

For long term:

1. The government of South Sudan should take the necessary efforts to begin national healing, peace and reconciliation process from the grassroots initiatives.
2. The government should review the current Constitution review processes to ensure that it is widely consulted and that citizen's opinion and views are reflected in the final constitution.
3. The government should ensure that political reforms are in consultation with other political party's .The government should put in place an all inclusive and regular political platform.
4. All the warring parties to the current conflict continue to respect rule of law, human rights and international rules of engagement.
5. The government should institute an inclusive national political dialogue, which will aim to restore unity in the country, build consensus on national vision and identity and set forth a national agenda for a sustainable peace and prosperity.

We the undersigned Organisations:

South Sudan NNGO Forum, Resource Centre for Civil Leadership, South Sudanese Network for Democracy and Elections, The Sudd Institute, Leading Minds Institute, Voice for Change, Organisation for Nonviolence and Development, Association for Media Development in South Sudan, South Sudan Law Society, Assistance mission for Africa, Youth Empowerment and Advocacy Forum, Nuer Peace Council

Peace and Development Collaborative Organisation, Association for Media Development in South Sudan, Eve Organisation, Mubadiroon Organisation Generation Agency for Development and Transformation, Soweto Community based Organisation Sudan Christian Youth Ministries International, Society for Civic Development and Community Empowerment for progress Organisation

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