

Secretary Kerry on South Sudan Negotiations

March 2, 2015

The warring parties in South Sudan must seize the current and final round of negotiations to deliver a sustainable peace. We are well past the point where enough is enough. Leaders must put the interests of their people above their own. The violence must end. A negotiated conclusion to this conflict is required now.

Legitimacy is not a presumed right of any government. It is conferred by the people, and it is sustained only by demonstrating leadership to protect and serve all citizens—responsibilities the government has neglected. The opposition has likewise failed to choose peace or make the hard choices required of leaders. Both President Kiir and Riek Machar have promised time and again that they would negotiate a transitional government under the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) process, but have failed to make the compromises needed.

The world is watching to see what the leaders of South Sudan will do. IGAD has outlined the way forward to a transitional government and necessary reforms, but the two sides continue to obfuscate and delay. The parties have until March 5 to secure an agreement that is inclusive, that initiates a broad range of transitional reforms and that ensures those responsible for human rights abuses are held to account.

The United States will work with our international partners, including in the region, the UN Security Council, and beyond, to take further concerted action against those who do not demonstrate a willingness to make the difficult decisions needed for peace.

Leaders can choose to do the hard work of implementing peace—or they can all too easily drift back into the nightmare of war. The choice is clear, and for the sake of all the people of South Sudan, I urge them to choose peace.