

SPLM POLITICAL LEADERS (FD)

PRESS RELEASE

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PROCEDURAL ISSUES IMPEDE THE PEACE PROCESS AGAIN!!

1. When President Kiir and former Vice President Dr. Machar committed themselves in the Agreement of 9th of May 2014, to end the brutal war raging in South Sudan within 60 days, both were applauded and greatly appreciated by the people of South Sudan who have been desperately yearning for peace. This gratefulness was also extended to the leaders of IGAD sub-region, the Peace Envoys and representatives of the international community, for bringing together the two leaders of the warring parties to sign the 9th May Agreement on the Resolution of the Crisis in South Sudan.
2. However, on 16th June when the launching of the all-stakeholder talks was called for the first time, both Government of South Sudan (GRSS) and Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement/Army in Opposition (SPLM/A [IO]) boycotted the session. GRSS said the reason for their boycott is that the Executive Director of IGAD had insulted the Republic of South Sudan and President Salva Kiir in particular.
3. On Friday, 20th June, 2014 when the launch was rescheduled for the second time at Raddisson Hotel, Addis Ababa, all the participants turned up in the Meeting Hall except the SPLM/A (IO) who again chose to boycott the opening session. Participants representing the Government of South Sudan, SPLM Leaders (Former Detainees), the Political Parties, Civil Society and Faith Based Leaders of both Christian and Muslim faith, were in full attendance.
4. The reasons given for the boycott by the SPLM/A in Opposition were procedural. Their boycott was said to be in protest against the procedure followed for the selection of the representatives of Political Parties, Faith based groups and civil society to the all-stakeholder peace talks by the Mediators. They argued that the selection was done without their consultation.
5. Attempts by the Foreign Minister of Ethiopia and the IGAD mediators to persuade the leadership of the SPLM/A in Opposition to allow their representatives to join the meeting while their complaint was being given due consideration were unsuccessful. This led to the launching of the peace talks without the SPLM/A in Opposition but in the hope that they would reconsider their position and attend the subsequent meetings the following morning. Again, the SPLM/A in Opposition continued with their boycott and so the process came to a final halt.
6. The Government delegation on its part joined the boycott, saying it cannot participate in further meetings in the absence of SPLM/A in Opposition which is the party fighting the government militarily, as this cannot bring any peace.
7. The other South Sudanese stakeholders including the SPLM Leaders (Former Detainees) joined the IGAD Envoys and made appeals to the SPLM/A (IO) leaders for them to reconsider their position but all these efforts were also in vain. Instead of the first reason for boycott relating to the selection of the Civil Society, Faith based Groups and Political Parties representatives, the SPLM (IO) presented new substantive reasons for non-participation. These reasons are:

- a) ***That the SPLM/A (IO) challenges the participation of the other Southern Sudanese stakeholders in the Peace negotiations, demanding that only the two warring parties are to engage in the negotiation of all the issues in the IGAD Framework Agenda for the resolution of the crisis in South Sudan.*** This of course is contrary to the 9th May Agreement signed by President Kiir and Former Vice President Dr. Machar, Leader of the SPLM/A (IO) in which both *"Agreed to insure the inclusion of all South Sudanese stakeholders in the peace process, and the negotiation of a transitional government of National Unity in order to ensure broad ownership of the agreed outcomes; stakeholders include: the two direct negotiators (the GRSS and the SPLM/A in Opposition), and others such as the SPLM Leaders (Former Detainees), Political Parties, Civil Society and Faith Based Leaders"*, and further *"Agree that these other stakeholders shall participate in the negotiations on transitional governance, the permanent constitution, and any other items that concern the political future of the country and reconciliation of South Sudanese communities."* In addition to the above, the IGAD summit of 10th June, 2014, underscores the principle of inclusivity as follows: *"Reaffirms the principle of inclusivity in all-stakeholder negotiations, in accordance with the agreement signed on 9th May, 2014, which envisages the participation of: the Government of the Republic of South Sudan, the SPLM/A in Opposition, SPLM Leaders (Former Detainees), Political Parties, Civil Society and Faith Based Leaders; that affirms that those stakeholders have the explicit right to determine the composition of their representation in consultation with the Mediation;"*
- b) ***That using the Roundtable as the modality for the plenary discussions by all stakeholders is not acceptable. SPLM/A (IO) would not like to sit around the same table with the other stakeholders.*** There is no better modality suggested by the SPLM (IO) that would be consistent with the 9 May Agreement. This can only be understood to mean that SPLM/A (IO) is no longer committed to the 9 May Agreement and does not respect the decisions of the last IGAD Summit of 10th June, 2014, which has consolidated the inclusiveness of the process for the purpose of ownership of any peace agreement by the people of South Sudan and to guarantee its legitimacy and sustainability.
8. Now the peace process is adjourned indefinitely for the reasons stated above, not to mention the failure of the warring parties to sign the long overdue modalities for the implementation of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement. No doubt, the lack of seriousness by these two South Sudanese Leaders in the face of the immense suffering facing their people as a result of the ongoing conflict, will result in increased suffering, feeling of hopelessness and total despair. This session of the peace talks, it was hoped, was going to be the last opportunity to end this cruel and brutal war. These hopes have now been dashed and the people are condemned to continue to suffer the vagaries of war with no end in sight.
9. We, the SPLM Political Leaders (FD) are equally disheartened by the indefinite adjournment forced by the position of the two warring parties. The fact that these South Sudanese Leaders would choose to ignore the yearning of our people for peace, and abuse the good will and desire of the region and the international community to take their country out of the conflict and suffering, is deplorable and unpatriotic, to say the least.

10. We call upon all the patriotic sons and daughters of South Sudan as individuals and groups to do what is within their power to bring this cruel and brutal war that is tearing apart the national fabric of our country, to an end. We further call upon South Sudanese to urge SPLM/A (IO) and the Government of South Sudan to return to the all-stakeholder negotiation table. They should recommit to the 9th May Agreement and translate its letter and spirit into action. This war must be immediately stopped. We believe that all the underlying causes and issues relating to it, are resolvable if we put the Country above all parochial and selfish interests.

May God Bless South Sudan



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