

## ADVISORY MESSAGE TO THE CITIZENS OF SOUTH SUDAN DURING THE FIRST INDEPENDENCE CELEBRATIONS

from  
His Grace Archbishop Paulino Lukudu Loro,  
Catholic Metropolitan Archbishop of Juba,  
and  
The Most Reverend Archbishop Daniel Deng Bul,  
Archbishop and Primate of Episcopal Church of the Sudan  
and Bishop of ECS Diocese of Juba

on the occasion of the First Anniversary  
of the Independence of the Republic of South Sudan  
9<sup>th</sup> July 2012

*What does the Lord require of you? To act justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God (Micah 6:8)*

1. We, the Catholic and Episcopal (Anglican) Archbishops in South Sudan, stood and voted together in the democratic elections in 2010. We again voted together in the referendum in January 2011, and together we monitored the exemplary conduct of the referendum. We stood together on the joyous day of Independence on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2011. Our two churches and their archbishops have stood together through many decades of war and peace. This solidarity was perhaps summed up at the Sudan Ecumenical Forum meeting in London in 2002 which produced the influential paper, "Let my people choose", a paper which helped to ensure that the right of self-determination was firmly entrenched in the Machakos Protocol and eventually the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). "We rarely travel out of Juba at the same time," the meeting was told by the two archbishops. "Juba needs an archbishop, and if only one of us is present, he is the archbishop for all the people of Juba". Now we stand together as archbishops to celebrate the first anniversary of the Independence of the Republic of South Sudan, and to express our joys and our concerns. We thank God, and we congratulate the President, the government and the citizens of South Sudan on reaching this landmark. We recognise in it the spiritual journey of a people.
2. We invite all people of good will to reflect with us on this occasion. We are not politicians. The Prophetic Voice of the Church reads the signs of the times in the light of Gospel values and, like the prophets of the Old Testament, calls for a change of heart leading to a change of behaviour. Thus we have prepared this message to our people, our government and our international friends.
3. Our first year as an independent nation has seen many good developments. Roads are being built, telecommunications networks are expanding, domestic airlines are serving many destinations, passports are being issued, embassies are being set up all over the world, government institutions are beginning to develop. A Transitional Constitution was produced. A nascent sense of national pride and identity is beginning to form. The international community welcomed the world's newest nation and assisted in many ways, for which we express our gratitude. The nation has addressed some of its internal problems, most notably the inter-ethnic conflict in Jonglei State, in which the Church is grateful to God for having had the opportunity to play a leading role in the peace process. The government has conducted a disarmament programme in Jonglei State which has been largely peaceful and broadly welcomed by the communities on the ground, and has committed itself to providing security. Citizens of the Republic of Sudan are treated well, and there is no inter-religious tension. We as a nation – government, Church and citizens – can be proud of all of this.

4. As we celebrate this first year of Independence, nevertheless we must note with sadness many of the problems which have occurred within the new nation. It has been reported that a huge sum of money has been stolen by high ranking officials. We wonder how much more is yet to be uncovered in subsequent audit reports. Corruption has become endemic within certain classes. This is unacceptable. Ethnic discontent is a constant danger, both between communities at the grassroots and also in perceptions of the ethnic make-up of government institutions. There are reports of growing resentment against citizens of our neighbouring countries which supported us during our liberation struggle. Knowing how much we still need the support of the East African Community as a trading partner, we call for the cultivation of better relations with our neighbours, guided by the call of Christ to “love your neighbour as yourself.” The delivery of basic infrastructure and services such as roads, health, education and water has not met the high expectations of our people. The review process for the production of a new Permanent Constitution has not been as inclusive as expected, and the Church has not been adequately represented. The security organs should be the friends and servants of the people, but some within these organs have gone against this principle. While we thank God for the relative peace in Western Equatoria and Western Bahr el Ghazal in the face of the Lord's Resistance Army which has operated in those parts of the country, we call on all citizens to be vigilant and not to give room to destructive forces on our land.

5. Relations between the governments of Sudan and South Sudan have deteriorated to unacceptable levels. We reject war as an option to resolve disputes and call upon all parties to implement a meaningful cease-fire and withdrawal of forces from the border region. The Abyei Protocol of the CPA, agreed by both parties, has provided the means to resolve the issue of Abyei through a referendum. Both parties to the CPA also agreed that the demarcation of the international border between the two countries should be based on the boundary of 1956. Oil is a God-given resource which should benefit both countries. We call for an agreement based on international norms for transshipment of oil, and for a recognition of the damage done to the people of both nations by the current impasse. Prices are rising and there are shortages of essential commodities, including fuel, making life harder for the ordinary citizens. This must be addressed as a matter of urgency.

6. Human dignity is given by God, and does not depend on where one happened to be born. We call for an end to harassment and expulsions of South Sudanese in Sudan, and for all people to be accorded their human and civil rights regardless of which country they find themselves in. We also call for an end to the abduction of South Sudanese by armed groups. We urge our brothers and sisters not to take up arms against fellow citizens but to join the democratisation of their countries.

7. We welcome the UN Security Council Resolution 2046 of 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2012. We note that it was passed unanimously, and for that we thank all the members of the Security Council. We are glad at last to see a resolution that deals comprehensively with many of the key issues including Abyei; that sets deadlines and promises sanctions if they are not met; that calls for border demarcation; and that creates a buffer zone to prevent further clashes. We welcome the prohibition of inflammatory and hostile propaganda, and insistence on the governments' obligation to protect their citizens. We urge both nations to implement the UN resolution fully and immediately and to recommence negotiations under the auspices of the African Union Higher Implementation Panel (AUHIP) in good faith. Threats, polarisation, rhetoric, brinkmanship, extremism and acts of violence are not a sound basis for meaningful negotiations.

8. The Church is not only for Christians or for South Sudanese. The Church identifies especially with the poor and oppressed of any creed, ethnicity or nationality, wherever they are. We are saddened by developments in the Republic of Sudan which appear to threaten ethnic, religious and

cultural diversity. In particular we are saddened by the attacks on the compound of the Sudan Evangelical Presbyterian Church, the demolition of the Episcopal Church of the Sudan's St John's Parish in Hai Baraka in Khartoum, destruction of ECS facilities and the Comboni (Catholic) School in Kadugli, the takeover of Catholic schools in Khartoum and Omdurman, the closure of Sudan Council of Churches and Sudanaid offices in Nyala, and attacks on unarmed civilians in other parts of Sudan. We are also concerned that there is no end in sight to Sudan's three civil wars, in Darfur, the Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile. There is no military solution; we call on all parties to enter meaningful negotiations. We also call for immediate international humanitarian access to all these areas.

9. We recognise that we as South Sudanese may have failed in some way to express our hopes and aspirations to the international community in a way which they can understand. We hope that this celebration of the first anniversary of Independence will be an opportunity for government, Church and people of South Sudan to communicate better with our international friends.

10. We reiterate the dream expressed by the bishops of our two churches when they met in Yei in May 2012: a dream of two nations which are democratic and free, where people of all religions, all ethnic groups, all cultures and all languages enjoy equal human rights based on citizenship. We dream of two nations at peace with each other, cooperating to make the best use of their God-given resources, promoting free interaction between their citizens, living side by side in solidarity and mutual respect, celebrating their shared history and forgiving any wrongs they may have done to each other. We dream of people no longer traumatised, of children who can go to school, of mothers who can attend clinics, of an end to poverty and malnutrition, and of Christians and Muslims who can attend church or mosque freely without fear. We call on the governments of both countries to work towards making that dream a reality.

11. The church commits to its time-tested belief in non-violence as the means to resolve conflicts. It also remains committed to the promotion of peace at all levels through Gospel values, by playing its pastoral role of trauma healing and counselling, and local level conflict mediation, to keep the nation united and focused on the future.

12. The church will remain united across the two sovereign countries. We must look at our differences from a new perspective. We must see our cultural diversity as a strength for development and use it for harmonious coexistence. It is our mutual responsibility to ensure that the new Republic of South Sudan is built on a strong foundation of equality, human dignity and human rights, and justice.

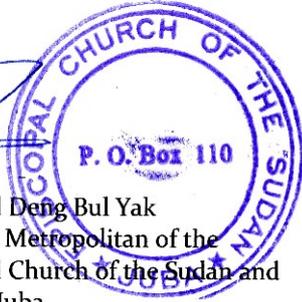
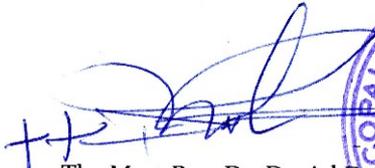
13. We call upon our governments, our citizens and the international community: *"To act justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God"*(Micah 6:8). In doing so we speak with authority, for these are the words of God.

14. We again offer our thanks to God and our congratulations to the President, the government and the citizens of South Sudan. We encourage them to continue to work and pray for peace and justice.

Signed in Juba, South Sudan, for the first anniversary of Independence Day, 9<sup>th</sup> July 2012



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