

Second Church Leaders Forum

“Our help is in the name of the LORD, the maker of heaven and earth (Psalm 124,8)”

Juba, March 10/11, 2011

Time to Act

Communique

We, leaders of the Sudanese Church, both from Sudan Council of Churches (SCC) member and non member churches, assembled in Juba on March 10/11, 2011, to review the situation after the Referendum in South Sudan as well as to discuss the challenges ahead, especially after July 9, when Southern Sudan will become independent, and two new nations need to be built: North and South Sudan.

In our communique of the first Church Leaders Forum just a year ago, March 26, 2010, we expressed that Sudan will never be the same again after the Referendum, whether it would remain united or would become two entities, and we stated the “Kairos Moment” for the country.

We congratulate the people for staying peaceful during the Referendum. Being grateful to God for this peaceful conduct of the Referendum, to the government of Sudan as well as to the international community for having accepted the outcome, we nevertheless remain deeply concerned and highly alarmed about the current situation, namely

- The ongoing and increasing violence, particularly in Abyei, Darfur, Jonglei, Upper Nile, Lakes and Western Equatoria States
- The humanitarian situation of the returnees and newly displaced
- The outstanding full implementation of the CPA, especially the Abyei Referendum, the elections and Popular Consultations in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile, and the boarder demarcation,
- The lack of agreement on issues of the post referendum period, namely the agreements on citizenship, on oil, international debts, and on security
- The serious economic situation in our country
- The lack of inclusiveness in reviewing the Interim Constitutions
- The war culture of our people, and the amount of small arms in the hands of individuals
- The militant crackdown on those who peacefully demonstrate for their rights
- The treatment of those who converted from one religion to another
- The deep trauma with our people, and the lack of national reconciliation and healing

At a time, when finally peace should prevail, we once again have to condemn and reject in strongest terms any form of violence, causing the killing, torture and mass displacement of innocent people. Being aware of the fact, that this is partly resulting from the memory of the war times, unsolved issues of the past, the deep trauma with all our people, including the leaders, and the easy availability of arms, we commit ourselves to immediately increase all our efforts to heal the Nation, to reconcile our people and to contribute to a peaceful and just Nation building. We urge our leaders to put down arms, to refrain from using violence to solve disputes, but to use peaceful and legal means instead.

We ask the international community to step up efforts in helping to address the most urgent humanitarian needs of the suffering people, but likewise we urge our governments to provide all necessary assistance. We particularly ask our governments to fulfil their duties in providing security to all people.

We are convinced, that a peaceful future for our people needs to be based on the principles of respecting the dignity of every human being, on justice, equal rights and opportunities for all people, inclusiveness, accountability and transparency.

Therefore, we reject any statement calling for Sharia to be the source of the new constitution in the North. We call for the full acknowledgment of the cultural, ethnic, religious diversity and the equality of identities. Both North and South Sudan, even after July 9, will remain diverse in terms of culture, ethnicity and religion. The constitutions of the two new countries need to reflect this reality, and we call for constitutional processes in both parts, where the peoples' views are at the centre.

We call on the parties to the CPA to gear up efforts to solve the outstanding issues, and to guarantee the rights as written down in the CPA, namely for Abyei, Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan.

We commit ourselves to respect and fully implement the values and ethics we stand for, and to help working out constitutions, which will reflect these values and ethics. We further commit ourselves to stay vigilant, and never keep silent on any issue of injustice or any other Human Rights violation.

We finally call on all stakeholders, to put the rights and well being of the people in the centre of all efforts.

May God bless all people of North and South Sudan

Juba, March 11, 2011

Signed on behalf of the participants

Bp Ezekiel Kondo, Chair SCC