

# Quarterly Bulletin 101

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*Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ.*

*Galatians 6:2 NIV*

*And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.*

*Ephesians 6:18 NIV*

### **POLITICAL SITUATION IN BOTH SUDANS**

Our Diocese of Salisbury has been supporting the Churches and people of Sudan and South Sudan for 48 years and whilst the governments often fail to deliver on their promises, they also surprise us. The Sudans are challenging places. Surprisingly the journey towards peace and democracy in Sudan (the North) has been making real progress with an agreed three-year plan in which the new Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok was appointed by the new Sovereignty Council of Sudan which superseded the Transitional Military Council. PM Hamdok's university studies were Sciences at Khartoum, and a PhD in Economics at Manchester, and he has worked for the UN and international banks in the region. Amongst his passions for revitalizing life for the people of Sudan are agriculture and women's rights. He believes that Africa could be food self-sufficient, but he also recognizes the threat of global warming and he is aware that "300 million Africans are hungry". The long conflict with South Sudan and other internal forces and the loss of oil revenues following independence of the South has exacerbated the crisis. Following increasing unrest and a demand for democracy, President Omar al-Bashir, who had been in power since 1989 and had led the independence talks with the South, was removed earlier this year by his own armed forces and charged with inciting and participating in the killing of protesters, and with corruption and money laundering.

He had already been indicted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for genocide in Darfur and still faces trial for those crimes. The 'Forces of Freedom and Change Alliance' (FFC) now holds political power in Sudan during the 39-month transition to democracy and governance and it is encouraging to note that the ruling council includes two women, one of whom is a minister in the Coptic Church. The Primate of the Episcopal Church of Sudan, Archbishop Ezekiel Kondo, is working with the new government to sustain freedom of worship and justice for all in his province.

Ironically the long-awaited inception of the South Sudan Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity (RTGoNU) on the 12<sup>th</sup> November, chaired initially by Omar al-Bashir, was unsurprisingly not delivered. Meeting the demands of the agreement endorsed by the East African group of countries known as the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) is full of very difficult and deeply interrelated challenges in which the two major parties involved, led by President Salva Kiir and Vice-President Riek Machar, the leader of the SPLM-IO (the opposition), still do not trust one another. Whilst it is generally agreed that the ceasefire is just about holding, the challenge for the leadership and the Troika (UK, USA and Norway) as guarantors of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and IGAD and the UN is how to resolve these major interrelated issues. They centre around the cantonment of armed forces from both sides in suitable locations where they can be taught to work and live and train together and be fed as South Sudanese into a unified force rather than members of tribes and clans holding resentments and grudges for past atrocities. In parallel and directly related to this task is the settlement on the number of internal states within South Sudan, and where their borders should be drawn. Until recently there were ten states and President Kiir is proposing 28 possibly 32 states. This draws into the equation ever more local ancient traditions and issues of identity and loyalty, and aspirations for new local governors to establish independent authority – including basic issues of grazing rights and freedom to roam for example. It is proving to be very hard to resolve these issues, hence a further 100 days

for the parties to reach agreement. The South Sudan Council of Churches have a major role to play in seeking peace across all tribes and people and we continue to support them and the Justice and Peace Committee of the Episcopal Church of South Sudan (ECSS) with the help of Christian Aid and other agencies. The end of February 2020 is not far away.

### **THE EPISCOPAL UNIVERSITY**

The new University is awaiting its final sign-off from the South Sudan government, having satisfied all the requirements. The Sudans Link has agreed to provide practical support by funding solar power and internet equipment costing just under £14,000. Internet access is a vital tool for modern higher education and particularly for a dispersed university with a number of campuses. The University is still seeking an academic with senior management experience to take the role of Vice Chancellor for up to 3 years. If you know anyone who could possibly be willing to serve in this way, the person to contact is Dr Eeva John. There is a link to her email on <https://www.ecsssup.org/> and she can provide more information about the role.

### **A VISIT TO SUDAN .....**

Robert Hayward, a member of our committee, visited Sudan from 12 August - 4 September on behalf of the Anglican Communion Fund (ACF) as Archbishop Ezekiel's Assessor for a 3-year Capacity-Building Grant given by the ACF to the Episcopal Church of Sudan (ECS). He also monitored and reported on the Salisbury-Sudans Committee's grants to ECS. Archbishop Ezekiel sent back with Robert a detailed financial report on Salisbury's £5,000 2018 grant for an Archbishop's Discretionary Fund. So far 36 payments have been made to needy people who came to the ECS Office, seeking help and support in the areas of health and education. including people of other faiths. Archbishop Ezekiel expressed thanks to Bishop Nicholas and the Link Committee for making it possible for him to support others. A £3,000 grant approved in 2018 by the Salisbury Education Sub-Committee for the refurbishment of Amadi Basic School in Omdurman could not be spent because of a dispute over the ownership of the school. It has now

paid for the construction of two new classrooms at one of the other two ECS basic schools in Omdurman. More classrooms are needed because the school had to be divided into two by a wall with two separate entrances, to meet the government's requirements that girls and boys be educated separately. The two classrooms still need plastering and finishing off; work will be paid for by the parents and the Diocese of Khartoum. At Shokai Bible Training Institute Robert heard and saw how Salisbury's 2018 £5,000 "running-costs" grant was being spent, mainly on maintenance and staff salaries.

#### **..... and SOUTH SUDAN**

Robert also visited South Sudan from 10 to 31 July for his role with Christian Aid. He reported that Salisbury's £10,000 grant towards the salary for an Emergency Coordinator for the ECSS's Development and Relief Agency (SSUDRA) has been very effective in increasing their project planning, implementation and reporting capacity, particularly in the Diocese of Bentiu, with the Emergency Coordinator training volunteers and local church staff and completing a base-line survey and assessments for grant applications. Archbishop Justin Badi also has a Discretionary Fund grant from Salisbury and has submitted a report on how this has been spent. Robert helped with writing an application for a £2,000 grant to fund a small monthly payment to the voluntary Finance Officer of the Justice, Peace and Reconciliation Committee, whose role is vital in raising funds for the JPRC's work.

#### **SOMA VISIT TO WAU**

A team from SOMA UK will be visiting Wau from 27 November -10 December, including 4 people from Salisbury Diocese. Please pray for them that they will be protected during their trip and that their visit will indeed 'empower, encourage, equip, enable and envision' the local leaders who have invited them.

#### **DATA PROTECTION**

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