



27th January 2023

South Sudanese Women Clergy of the South Sudan Council of Churches and the South Sudan Islamic Council issue this statement in advance of the Ecumenical Pilgrimage of Peace of His Holiness Pope Francis, Archbishop Justin Welby and Moderator Iain Greenshields scheduled for the 3rd – 5th February 2023 in Juba, South Sudan. As we prayerfully anticipate this pilgrimage, **we urge the global ecumenical church leaders to persist in their demand for peace, justice and unity in South Sudan.**

Additionally, we acknowledge and recognize the efforts that have been undertaken by the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity to implement the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS). However, we urge the South Sudanese national leaders to diligently and timely implement the Roadmap of the R-ARCSS, and intentionally engage the non-signatories to the revitalized peace agreement, to ensure a smooth transition to a democratically elected government. We specifically urge them to:

1. **Prioritize the professionalization and deployment of the unified security sector forces** ensuring they are fully aware of their obligations to respect and protect all citizens regardless of ethnicity and gender; and fairly and justly discharge their responsibilities.
2. **Expedite the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) process.** DDR will facilitate the voluntary removal of small arms and light weapons which are used to perpetrate armed violence, sexual and gender-based violence, inter-clan and inter-ethnic conflicts.
3. **Establish, support and respect R-ARCSS chapter 4 institutions** like the Anti-corruption Commission, Women and Youth Enterprise Development Funds and the Economic and Financial Management Authority which are tasked with promoting accountable, efficient and equal revenue distribution.
4. **Expedite the establishment of the Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing,** and consider including representatives from the clergy in the Commission, and as key partners.
5. **Prioritize the reforms and the functions of the justice system** to provide justice and accountability for crimes like land grabbing and facilitate the effective functioning of the Gender Based Violence Court to prosecute crimes of rape and gendered violence.
6. **Provide professional security forces and engage community, women, inter-faith and development partners** in addressing the root causes of conflicts between farmers and migrating pastoralists, inter-clan and inter-ethnic conflicts, to find more permanent and lasting solutions.
7. **Provide security along the high-ways, roads and areas of recent fighting** including in Kajokeji, Kuda, Malakal, Mangalla, Morobo, Tombura, Tonj and Pibor.
8. **Prioritize critical service provision including education and healthcare.** Threats of privatization of public universities and health institutions risk rendering many unable to access essential services.
9. **Promote Freedom of Expression** where citizens can freely express themselves without fear of repercussion and the national leaders actively listen to the needs and concerns of the citizens.
10. **Protect the human rights and promote the dignity** of all citizens including addressing the needs of the internally displaced and the vulnerable.

Father James Oyet
General Secretary, South Sudan Council of Churches

