

Press Statement

Ambassador Lumumba Stanislaus Di-Aping

Former Ambassador to the United Nations (New York), Former Chairman of the G77+China

Former-Member of National Liberation Council from Lakes State, Cuiebet County.

Compatriots and comrades, I stand here today, grateful for the diversity of our ethnic heritage as South Sudanese people. In our multitudes we confirm the greatness of our people. We stand here proud that the modern history of South Sudan has been a long march for freedom, a determined, unrelenting struggle for emancipation, equality, democracy, and prosperity with the singular aim of building a democratic secular state of our own, a united African nation-state that is ours. A country that is ours all of us, from the Azande, the Anyuak, the Bari, the Collo, the Dinka, the Fertit, the Latuka, the Luo, the Madi, the Mundari, the whole of us as a society, all the multitudes of our people. A country where every one of us, man and woman, elder and child is regarded as free and autonomous, simply by being a person and a descendant of this great historic African nation that constitutes our existential core. It is this indefatigable will to and vision of freedom, this African-ness of our being that has empowered our martyrs to sacrifice their lives for over two centuries. It is their dream of freedom, of equality as human beings, their total and absolute rejection of enslavement in its different guises and shapes that prepared over two millions of our people to die, giving birth to country. This newly born country, this newly born republic, we now call South Sudan, is their child. It has been delivered to us to nurture, to build into a proud member of the family of nations on earth.

Comrades and compatriots, at this historical junction in the life our country let us remember that it is the struggle of our people for equality as human beings, their proclamation of the Rights of Man and principle of National Sovereignty that willed them to fight and secure the right of self-determination in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005. It is their fundamental belief in our right as a people, united in purpose and destiny that delivered our independence by way of free voting in an internationally supervised referendum, the first in the world to successfully do so, to the surprise and acclamation of the whole world. It is our people, en masse, in their millions who have achieved and delivered 'our country'. Nobody else can claim she/he brought us independence. It was not a gift.

And what does our government offer our people, this great nation, in return? Not Peace, not democracy, not development, and not prosperity. Only death and suffering.

Our failing government, having lost legitimacy, offers our citizens organized political intimidation and violence to silence and eliminate their conscience. Our government, typified and dominated by malfunctioning institutions, offers abject poverty and misery for our citizens. Our government's task has been 'the delivery' of financial collapse, irresponsible borrowing, massive indebtedness and flourishing corruption robbing the country of billions of dollars.

This vast fertile, water and soil rich land cannot feed herself because its government does not care for the hunger and plight of its citizens. Instead of launching an agrarian revolution it has wasted hundreds of millions dollars in dodgy corrupt schemes.

Compatriots, our government and failed-state provides no health service, nor education to its citizens. Over 90% of our children are condemned to illiteracy. We have no physical infrastructure, no roads, no clean drinking water and sanitation and no electricity. And no salaries to our people.

Comrades, the list is long. What a shame. With such a track record, truly, only a shameless leadership can forcibly cling to power and political office. If the millions of our people who perished during the liberation struggle were to rise today from their grave they would cry rivers, in anger.

As if that is not enough, compatriots.

Our government has chosen to give away our national sovereignty and territory, as demonstrated by Mile-14 and the presence of foreign troops and military advisors to maintain-in-power a regime as politically and morally bankrupt as never witnessed in the region. South Sudan is being reduced into an animal farm where free and open participation of our citizens in the public of their country is absolutely denied, where minds are being closed, where wisdom and morals are thrown into the bins. Nobody ever thought that one day, South Sudan, as an independent state, will be reduced into a failing state where 100+ women would be raped in one city, in one month as it happened in Wau. Who among our leaders, from Anyanya I, Anyanya 2, the SPLM-founders and martyrs, our late leaders from the Southern Front, the SANU, SAK and the Liberal party who died before 2005, would believe the South Sudan they fought for its independence, would become a country where women from good families would offer themselves outside foreign exchange bureaus, in order to feed their children. A country where proud men, youth and children, would be reduced to begging in the streets of Juba. A Place where freedom fighters who have spent their lives in the bush would have no place and no one to turn to in their last few years in life.

Compatriots: We have a state and a government that has, for its entire ruling-life, refused to deliver human security, let alone, law and order as witnessed in Lakes State where innocent citizens and youth have been encouraged and armed to create a state of anarchy for the political use and benefit of our ruling elite. As we speak now, the average daily death count is 15 people in a quiet day. The count rises to 150 heads, some days. And notwithstanding this carnage and bloodshed, the President remains indifferent and disinterested. The President does not feel the pain of the people of Lakes State whether Agar, Gok or Yirol People. The people of Lakes State do understand that they are being decidedly and systematically marginalized and 'destituted'. They know that they are being treated as if they are 'the others', citizens of another country.

Compatriots, what is happening in the Lakes State is another 'massacre' overseen and masterminded in a slow-motion. Lakes State is being reduced into a ditch of atrocities, violence and gross violations of human rights. This got to stop. We have got to end a regime that delights in the suffering of our people. We have got to stop this system that thinks Lakes State's role in South Sudan is servitude and the supply of unpaid soldiers to advance their undemocratic and corrupt rule.

The root causes of this shocking state-failure, this near state-collapse and this catastrophic situation that our country faces today are many and deeply embedded in the history of our final-leg of our liberation struggle and in the ruling 'SPLM/A' system of governance. To start with, the fact that our liberation struggle had taken a form of a civil war fought principally in South Sudan and not as a direct anti-colonial struggle has generated deep and cumulative divisions that fractured our national social fabric and cohesion. Within the war of liberation, there were many other violent confrontations. Some were open wars and some were clandestine. Our societies were 'ethnicized' and pitted against each other. There were violent and silent enmities among the Dinka as a group. You would remember the enmities and insults publicly exchanged between Bahr el Ghazal community and Bor community, the Dinka of Rumbek and Greater Gogrial. Then there were the violent strives between the Nuer and the Dinka. There were battles between the Mundari and other Equatorians against the Dinka and Nuer, to name a few. Our leaders were the ones who promoted disharmony and discord amongst our people in 1980s, 1990s, 2004 and up until now. We need fundamental overhaul.

All these strives, rifts and divisions were all about power struggle, personal and ideological. And they go far back to the time when some of our leaders decided to use violence to coerce and force to submission Anyanya 2 forces. Violent repression started with assassinations of Samuel Gai Tut, Benjamin Bol Akok, Martin Majier, Nyachigaak Nyaciluk, Martin Makur Alleu and Joseph Malath Lueth. So there is nothing new about the Government refusing dialogue and persuasion to convince the citizen of South Sudan of its vision. Of course it has none. The government has to revert to repression as the only means of prevailing politically. The government has to lie and fabricate stories of 'numerous coups' to justify its oppressive methods. So there is nothing new about the Juba massacre. Nothing new about the daily butchery in Rumbek.

Comrades what concerns us here is not who killed who. What concerns us is that we have become a socially fragile society. And the demands of our communities are equal recognition, equal participation, equal representation and equal rights as South Sudanese. We have to find a permanent and sustainable peace, reconciliation and harmony amongst us. There must be justice amongst us.

It is deeply disturbing that even after independence, there continue to live, in the leadership of the ruling-party, a strong under-current that rejects dialogue and reason and a strong sub-culture that opposes all reforms aimed at enabling our people to choose their system of governance and the model of state they dream of. The government is under-control of a looting-unthinking group bent on denying democracy, enlightenment and progress. Their response to every call for good governance is, '**We are only two years old.**' They are the advocates of 'development in reverse.' This is now the culture, the ideology and praxis that dominates the politics of South Sudan; deliberate impunity.

Compatriots, this way of governing will ruin our country beyond repair. But this impunity and way of governing is doomed. Throughout history of humanity the way to truth, progress and democracy has always won against tyranny and tyrants who thought they were invincible. The truth shall shine and the meek shall prevail. Said the prophets.

What we advocate is total and systemic reform and transformation of our country. As I have opined, as one of the authors of the SPLM Manifesto 2013, 'Our goal is to establish a strong democratic developmental state committed to principles of good governance, transparency and accountability and fight against corruption. Our goal is to build a State determined 'to make the quality of life for every citizen its central priority.' It is critical that we build 'a state with the legitimate mandate, full authority and unmatched capabilities to drive the process of progressive national economic transformation and to intervene in all levels of our society in ways that shall secure our national patrimony and promote greater justice, equality, social welfare and fairness.'

Compatriots, Federalism is the most efficient and the surest system of governance that will deliver the trinity of democracy, development and unity. A federal democratic developmental state is our only way to salvation and recovery. Federalism will undeniably pave the way for an ever perfecting unification of our people as African people united in purpose and destiny. We are first and foremost South Sudanese and forever Africans.

Compatriots, notwithstanding, the current ethnic horrors and communal rifts and jingoism, we share only one destiny. The purpose and fundamental justification for the existence of our Republic, Country and State, is to strengthen the capability of every woman, man and child to participate democratically and fully in, contribute amply to, and benefit in just proportion from the economic, political and moral life of our nation. That is the essence of the Federal dispensation we are calling for. Federalism is not a new hegemony of any ethnic group. It is an equalizer of all of us. It is a metaphor for equity, development and democratization. Federalism is a decentralized system of subsidiarity. It is a system of co-responsibility between institutions of governance at the central, regional and local levels. Federalism is not an ethnic heaven. There is nothing to stop the people of

Yirol and Mundari to establish a federal state if they choose to do so. There is nothing to stop the People of Gogrial from choosing their own federal state, or the People of Warp and Unity to decide to have one federal state. It is the people choice. Federalism is a system of empowering citizens of our country to participate fully in running the affairs of South Sudan from the bottom up and top-down.

Comrades, the demands for sustainable peace, democracy and development and for federalism will not come to light before we bring about a genuine power sharing transitional government. At the heart of this power sharing arrangement is the giving of genuine executive powers to both the President and the Prime Minister. Power sharing is the only way of securing a sustainable peace in our country. Why? Because, first, it is a system designed to restore national unity, to establish order and rule of law in our country, and to give our executive branch of government and ministers, the authority necessary for them to fulfill their mandate under the watchful eye an empowered parliament. Secondly, it is a system that will rid us of any authoritarianism and or type of democracies that enable the 'corrupt fact cats of our country from dominating absolutely the politics of South Sudan and thus creating massive inequalities and injustices that will lead ultimately to a systemic failure of our country. Thirdly, genuine power sharing between the President and the Prime Minister will eliminate the possibility of any jingoist using ethnic ideology/card from rising to power. Furthermore, it is a system that will stop the building up of ethnic hostilities, leading to volcanic eruptions that would cause near collapse of our state. Again.

Mr. President without embracing a just peace, without accepting fundamental reforms in our system of governance, and without purging the culture of impunity and corruption, the country will collapse in your hands. It is already teetering on collapse. Your legacy will come to naught. History will remember and record you in its annals as the first liberation struggle leader who charted the way to independence and delivered destruction to his people and country. Don't be misled by sycophants. Do the right thing for Christ sake: embrace change, reform and embrace the hopes of our people or quit. You live in a circle-snake pit. Don't let them hold guns to your head. If you do not bring a just peace, before history judge you, they will depose you. And the fighting and struggle will continue.

Long live South Sudan.