

MONYOMIJI PRESENTATION AT THE
MEETING WITH H.E REBECCA
NYADENG DE MABIOR CHOL, VICE
PRESIDENT, REPUBLIC OF SOUTH
SUDAN,
TORIT,
SOUTH SUDAN

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MONDAY JUNE 28, 2021

Your Excellency

Please accept our warmest greetings and welcome to Torit. We are indeed pleased with your decision to visit our state and Torit for the first time in the recent past. We also welcome your accompanying delegation and thank H.E the EES Governor for his leadership, support, guidance, and understanding throughout this process.

It is our sincere hope that by the end of this meeting, you and your delegation would have understood the aim and purpose of our petition to EES government, through its Ministry of Labour, Public Service and Human Resource Development, as simply to:

1. ask the state authorities to find out why the UN agencies, NGOs and humanitarian organisations working and operating in EES are not recruiting, hiring and employing qualified men and women from Torit, Ikwoto and LOPA/Lafon Counties in their organisations;
2. seek the inputs of the state authorities on why the Madi, Acholi and the Kuku ethnic communities are dominating employment in

the NGOs sector here in Torit, Ikwoto and LOPA/Lafon Counties of EES; and

3. find out from the state authorities why the United Nations agencies, NGOs and humanitarian organisations working and operating in Eastern Equatoria State (EES) are not only blatantly violating the laws of South Sudan by recruiting, hiring, and employing foreign nationals as South Sudanese, but also creating two categories of workers with the foreign nationals receiving their insurance, health and allowance benefits, and salaries in hard currency (USD) vis-à-vis the nationals/locals who are being paid in South Sudan Pound without any other benefits.

Your Excellency,

Indeed, we had absolutely no illusion that our efforts to shed light on the discriminatory practices the UN agencies, NGOs and humanitarian organisations working and operating from Torit are perpetuating in the recruitment and hiring qualified personnel from the communities of Torit, Ikwoto and LOPA/Lafon Counties was not going to be an easy task because: -

1. Donor countries, the United Nations and its agencies working and operating in South Sudan have all along influenced and dictated “*the developments of national and state legislations, law enforcement, military organisations, education, health, and others sectors of South Sudan’s economy*” in the name of the so-called “*capacity building*”, to the extent that even in cases which the local and state authorities are able to manage and address, the UN and its agencies have often interfered, forcing our governments to undermine each other and their own structures and authorities so as to appease these UN agencies, NGOs and the humanitarian organisations in South Sudan, Eastern Equatoria State (EES) notwithstanding. Truly befitting our African saying that, “*If you have your hand in another person’s pocket, you must move when he/she moves*”.

2. In most of their reports on South Sudan, the United Nations agencies, NGOs, and other humanitarian organisations working and operating in South Sudan have successfully painted South Sudan as a *crime-ridden* country in which they say “*...serious abuses [including – but not limited to] indiscriminate attacks against civilians, aid workers, unlawful killings, beatings, arbitrary detentions, torture, sexual violence,*

recruitment and use of child soldiers, looting and destructions of villages and properties” are being “*committed by the people and government of South Sudan*”. Interestingly, some of our leaders who are now blaming us the youth of South Sudan for bringing up the UN agencies, NGOs, and humanitarian organisations malpractices in the labour market in South Sudan have been implicated in some of those UN, NGOs and humanitarian organisations’ reports as complicit in the egregious abuses amounting to “*...war crimes and crimes against humanity*”.

3. The UN agencies, NGOs and humanitarian organisations working and operating in South Sudan have as well succeeded in perpetuating the self-serving logic that since “*corruption is prevalent in all sectors of South Sudan’s economy and state apparatus including financial, political, patronage and pervasive tribalism and misuse abuse of power*”, any South Sudanese including us the **MONYOMIJI** attempting to fight and expose any form of malpractices including corruption in the UN agencies, NGOs and humanitarian organisations would first have to address the lack of transparency, accountability and human rights issues in South Sudan. Sadly, this distorted thinking was even sold to us and our communities in

EES during the recent **Intra-Greater Torit Political Leaders Healing Retreat** who emphatically pleaded on behalf of the funding UN agencies and partners that “...*network, recruitment and hiring along tribal lines are common practices in South Sudan which the MONYOMIJI must either accept or deal with head-on*”.

4. Statistically, the United Nations agencies, NGOs, and humanitarian organisations working and operating in South Sudan are undermining community-based initiatives by taking the old “*missionary position of running projects and delivering services that are motivated by charity and pity for those whom they think and perceive to be incapable of doing things for themselves*”.
5. The UN agencies, NGOs and humanitarian keep reporting that South Sudan’s “*humanitarian situation is deepening*”, and “*the economy is on the brink of collapse [with no or little political order to manage the situation]*”, while at the same time branding the same South Sudanese as “*too demanding and restricting their movements and access to providing humanitarian assistance to the needy*”.

Your Excellency

It is against this background that the United Nations Office for Coordination and Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) instructed all the UN agencies, NGOs and humanitarian organisations working and operating in Eastern Equatoria State (EES) never to cooperate with and release any labour market information to us and members of the EES Constituted Assessment Committee during the assessment process. We were, therefore, not surprised by the amount of abuse hurled at us by some UN and NGOs staffs during our initial contact with them here in Torit in which we were called “*illiterate, primitive, uncivilised and backward in every aspect of life*” and who “*deserve nothing less than appreciation for being killed in war and cattle raiding*” “*employment in the army*”. Surely, some of the MONYOMIJI could not bear this unfair treatment and humiliation in their own land, state and country which indeed resulted into a brief scuffle at the beginning of the assessment process.

Worst still, some of the UN agencies, NGOs and humanitarian organisations went as far as reporting us to the South Sudan People’s Défense Forces (SSPDF) and the UNMISS deployment in Torit that we the MONYOMIJI were “*armed, a threat to UN*

agencies and NGOs and were to attack the military barracks, UNMISS base and NGOs staff” in the town, one reason why the Secretary General of South Sudan Red Cross (SSRC) issued a misleading public statement to that effect.

Today, no one knows how the events of that day would have turned out, had it not been for the timely intervention of the Eastern Equatoria State (EES) Governor H.E Louis Lobong Lojore who quickly confirmed from the South Sudan National Security officers on duty that day that the reports that we the **MONYOMIJI** were “*armed and on the way to attack SSPDF barracks and UNMISS deployment*” here in Torit town was completely unfounded and false.

Your Excellency,

As if the abuses of and false accusations against us **MONYOMIJI** were not enough and because UN OCHA and its agencies could not stop the assessment process from moving forward, the UN OCHA leadership in Juba mobilised all the NGOs operating in South Sudan through the NGOs Forum to deploy all resources at their disposal to ensure that the EES assessment process is stopped

before it is “*adapted by youth groups in other states and Administrative Areas of South Sudan*”. In response, the NGOs Forum subsequently directed the Head of UN OCHA in Juba to ignore, avoid and bypass any engagement with the EES authorities on the assessment and instead requested the National Ministry of Labour to use its power, authority, and resources to put an end to the assessment process in Torit.

The National Minister of Labour, however, issued a statement which neither supported nor rejected the desire and request of UN OCHA and NGOs Forum to stop the assessment process. On realising that the National Minister of Labour was not ready to support or oppose the EES assessment process, UN OCHA and its partners in Juba decided to meet H.E Rebecca Nyandeng de Mabior Chol and presented a report in which they claim that the **MONYOMIJI** assessment process in EES is wrong and dangerous because, in their view, if implemented, youth groups in other states would be tempted to replicate it and that, according to them, would lead to “*chaotic situation threatening the already fragile stability and security of South Sudan*”. Yes, you surely decided to share the UN OCHA alarming

security report with your colleagues in the Presidency and National Council of Ministers who then directed you to come to Torit.

Your Excellency,

As you very well know, most if not all of us the **MONYOMIJI** present owe our convictions of fighting injustices in whichever form to the training and philosophy of our late leader Dr John Garang de Mabior. Although the United Nations agencies seems to have convinced your office and some of your colleagues in the National Council of Ministers to see our petition on labour market, unfair recruitment and hiring in UN agencies, NGOs and humanitarian organisations as “*unlawful*”, we strongly believe that the steps we took and stages we followed throughout this process including the state-sanctioned Constituted Assessment Committee (CAC) to implement the **Ministerial Order 07/2921** from the Eastern Equatoria State Minister of Labour, Public Service and Human Resource Development were neither “*unlawful*”, nor “**politically motivated**”, and, therefore, must not in any way be used as a pretext for suppressing the role, place and contribution of the youth,

MONYOMIJI notwithstanding, in creating a future in which our people and communities are not again subjected to the dictates of others.

Your Excellency,

We – the people of Torit, Ikwoto and LOPA/Lafon Counties – have sacrificed too much for our struggle for freedom and justice, and we are not prepared to accept being treated yet again as second-class citizens in our country. We are also not prepared to entertain the misleading and false allegations that we are using the assessment process as means for chasing some people, agencies, or organisations from our areas.

Furthermore, we categorically demand an end to the excuses that we cannot be recruited and hired in any agencies or/and organisation working and operating in EES because we are not educated and qualified when in fact the malpractices in the UN/NGOs sector are purposely set to block us from being employed with the UN agencies, NGOs or/and humanitarian organisations.

Your Excellency,

In conclusion, allow us once again to thank you and your accompanying delegation for coming to Torit. We sincerely hope that you and your accompanying delegation will have a productive time with the people of EES, as we hereby wish you and your accompanying delegation safe return to our national capital Juba.

Thank you very much