

# The People's Coalition for Civil Action (The Coalition)

## The Declaration

Juba, South Sudan  
July 30, 2021

### Preamble

We the people of South Sudan, on this tenth anniversary of the declaration of independence, confirm our pledge to uphold and defend our hard-won sovereignty, committed to the unity of our people, their dignity, their liberty, their economic wellbeing, their individual freedom, and their right to a good and just governance, and reaffirming our pledge to preserve and protect territorial integrity of our country,

**Appreciating and recognizing** the courageous and collective struggle of our people for justice, freedom, equality, human dignity, and democracy,

**Having** been eyewitnesses to the wasted and destructive first decade of our independence,

**Responding** to the long and continuing suffering and agony of our people resulting from political failure and violent power struggle,

**Deploring** lack of strategic vision and direction for the country,

**Condemning** leadership failure, which is the root of all crises in the country and for which our people have paid the price with their dear lives,

**Regretting** political violence and politically engineered ethnic divisions among our people,

**Decrying** violent and corrupt pursuit of power and wealth,

**Regretting** the abuse of power and state capture by a few self-centered political elites,

**Seriously** concerned about state failure to ensure human, physical security and food security in the country, begetting the ever-growing dependency of our people on humanitarian aid,

**Demanding** accountability for the horrendous human rights abuses meted on our people,

**Condemning** the political leaders for failing to implement the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS), which is aimed at **delivering** peace and development for the people of South Sudan,

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**Condemning** the abysmal management of our international relations resulting in UN arms embargo, economic sanctions, and sanctions on government and military officials,  
Having been convinced that the current political leadership in our country cannot lead us to peace, stability and democracy,

**Recalling** and being guided by our liberation ideals of unity, equality, and progress,

**Applauding** the people of South Sudan for having dialogued for nearly four years and thereby reaching consensus on the future they deserve,

**Endorsing** the Resolutions of the South Sudan National Dialogue entirely and **affirming** our commitment to their full implementation,

**Desiring** a South Sudan that is guided by a strategic vision, governed on the basis of democratic values, and a federal structure in fulfilment of a historical aspiration of our people and recently confirmed through the National Dialogue,

**Believing** in the equality of all South Sudanese people, regardless of tribe, religion, color, or political association and that all people are to be treated equally before the law,

**Calling** for a system of governance and development that are authentic, home grown, and consistent with cultural values and institutions, and guided by egalitarian principles as expressed by our people through the various phases of the National Dialogue process,

**Demanding** a constitution derived from a broad-based consensus among the people of South Sudan and approved by elected representatives,

**Pledging** to transform South Sudan into a democratic, rule based, and prosperous society with its people free from abject poverty, political repression, and the scourge of war,

**Reaffirming** our commitment to the promises of our long and arduous liberation struggle of liberty, justice, equality, and prosperity for all our people,

**Resolving** to overcome the bitter past and to meet the future with optimism, resolve and a sense of purpose and unity,

**NOW AGREED** to establish the **People's Coalition for Civil Action**, herein after, **The Coalition**.

## Article 1: Stating the Fundamental Problem of South Sudan

### 1. Leadership Failure and Lack of Strategic Vision

South Sudan's intractable crises are directly a result of leadership failure. South Sudan's leaders have failed to provide a strategic and shared vision for the country and the country is simply floating and





drifting without guidance and obviously without a clear direction. The political system which was meant to be democratic is now stunted and autocratic with no growth and no progress. Development aspirations, fundamental freedoms and services are muted, and the country has slipped from poverty rate of 50.6% in 2009 to 82% in 2021 according to recent World Bank estimates<sup>1</sup>. Although the SPLM prepared a framework for peace and development 2004, it was willfully disregarded. The promise of our liberation struggle to improve the lives of ordinary South Sudanese, is completely dishonored. The dream of taking towns to the people, in the form of services has disappeared in the government literature.

As a result of leadership failure South Sudan has slowly but steadily been moving towards an authoritarian system since independence and now, it is a full-fledged dictatorship. It can more appropriately be described as a diffused and shared dictatorship under minority clique in power mainly in the executive arm of government in Juba. Political and communal violence and theft have reign supreme in our country since 2005 and our citizens have been turned into mere objects and they have been silenced not to expect services or complain about misrule. Weapons have been distributed to them and stoked to kill each other to keep busy with internal local matters while national resources and power are arrogated to a few who have taken full ownership of the country and hijacked the state. Constitutionally, the police and other security agencies were meant to protect people but this is not effectively the case.

The country has dreadfully lost its moral, political, economic, and cultural bearings, with no collective sense of higher purpose. People are simply pursuing personal interests, while the nation is rotting and collapsing. The people of South Sudan desire a new direction and a new strategic and shared vision to move the country forward.

## 2. State Failure

There are futile debates whether South Sudan was born a failed state or that it failed after the 2013 conflict. What cannot be debated is the fact that South Sudan is indeed a failed state. State failure is directly attributed to leadership failure and the failure of political systems. The leaders of South Sudan have by their actions or inactions failed the country. A failed state is a state that “is no longer able to consistently and legitimately enforce its laws or provide its citizens with basic goods and services”<sup>2</sup>. Failed states are characterized by insurgency, high crime rates, ineffective and impenetrable bureaucracy, corruption, judicial incompetence, and military interference in politics<sup>3</sup>. All of these attributes and more characterize South Sudan.

The state of South Sudan is unable to ensure internal cohesion, which is the reason for the persistent communal violence, cattle raiding, and child abduction. The country is awash with small arms and light weapons and civilians carry these weapons openly and use them against each other and the state is unable to stop, apprehend and hold the offenders accountable. It is now glaringly obvious that this dysfunctional government cannot deliver peace, security, and stability which the country desperately needs.

<sup>1</sup> See more at: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/southsudan/overview>

<sup>2</sup> For more, visit: <https://www.thoughtco.com/what-is-a-failed-state-definition-and-examples-5072546>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid





Second, the state is not able to ensure the territorial integrity of the country. Its borders with Sudan remain contested and not demarcated and there are many incidents of encroachment by neighboring countries.

Third, the state is unable to exert control and monopolize the legitimate use of coercive force. There are many groups who are able to threaten the state, including local communities and many armed rebellions.

Fourth, there is widespread failure of public institutions at the national, state, and local levels, which is why the government is unable to provide social services to the people.

Fifth, the economy is dilapidated characterized by high unemployment rates among the youth and lack of local production.

Lastly, the government is unable to pay public employees, including soldiers, civil servants, and diplomats. As a result, there is institutional collapse everywhere and there is little respect for public offices. All these have rendered the government weak and ineffective.

### **3. Democracy and Decentralization Abandoned**

The leaders of South Sudan have deliberately decided to turn South Sudan into a dictatorship contrary to our liberation ideals and the constitution. For example, Article 1 of the Transitional Constitution of South Sudan 2011, as amended, Sub Article 4 states that "South Sudan is governed on the basis of a decentralized democratic system." There is no shred of democracy in South Sudan, it is simply a lip service. The ruling party is not democratic, and it does not make democratic decisions and so there is no such thing as a democratic system in South Sudan. What is there can be described at best, as a dysfunctional authoritarian system, or at worst as a directionless authoritarian system, a far cry from the constitutional provision and people's aspirations.

### **4. Justice Subverted and Freedom Denied**

South Sudan, a country aspiring to create a just and peaceful society, has struggled tremendously from lack of justice. Article 1 of our Constitution 2011, Sub Article 5 states that "South Sudan is founded on justice, equality, respect for human dignity and advancement of human rights and fundamental freedoms." These words ring very hallow and the practice is a stark contrast of these important ideals. South Sudan does not resemble any just or equal society, much less any respect for human dignity and human rights.

### **5. People's Sovereign Power Usurped**

In every democratic nation, the source of governmental power (sovereignty) lies with the citizens. This recognition is made in the Transitional Constitution of South Sudan 2011 as amended. Article 2 of our constitution stipulates that "Sovereignty is vested in the people and shall be exercised by the State through its democratic and representative institutions established by this Constitution and the law." Elections are the only means through which citizens can confer governmental powers to the





elected authorities. South Sudan never conducted democratic elections since independence. The last elections were conducted under the Sudan government which have elapsed since 2015.

Hence, the current leaders and the institutions they have instituted are operating unconstitutionally and more so undemocratically, not to speak of their representativeness. Unfortunately, there are no democratic or representative institutions in South Sudan. The current government came through a negotiated political settlement. Therefore lacks sovereign sanction, the political leaders have therefore usurped sovereign power.

## **6. Civil Rights Restricted**

Civil rights generally include freedom of speech, freedom to assemble and associate, freedom of the press, freedom of religion, freedom to vote, freedom against unwarranted searches of your home or property, freedom to have a fair court trial, freedom to remain silent in a police interrogation. All these rights are protected under the constitution through the Bill of Rights from Article 9 through Article 34 of South Sudan constitution. Contrary to the provisions of the constitution, our people are not able to freely gather in South Sudan to express their views on the political situation in the country. Even registered political parties are not able to hold rallies and people are not allowed to protest in violation of this article.

## **7. Public Services Not Provided**

The aim of any government is to serve its people. Our constitution, Article 35 (2) states that "This Constitution shall be interpreted and applied to advance the individual dignity and address the particular needs of the people by dedicating public resources and focusing attention on the provision of gainful employment for the people, and improving their lives by building roads, schools, airports, community institutions, hospitals, providing clean water, food security, electric power and telecommunication services to every part of the country." South Sudan government has failed in all aspects in living up to the promises of this constitutional provision. We have no roads, no clean water even in the National Capital, Juba, more than half of the population is being fed through humanitarian aid, many people cannot find work because the economy has collapsed. Consequently, the young people in South Sudan fail to get jobs, so they are drawn to destructive activities such as gun violence, rebellions, cattle raiding, child abduction and other illicit activities.

## **8. Grand Corruption Instituted**

Corruption has been the trademark of the government of South Sudan for the last ten years of our independence and even before that. The people of South Sudan have been very vocal against grand corruption in the country and have called for more transparency in the government and for those culpable to be held to account. Corruption according to Transparency International is defined as the abuse of entrusted power for private gain. Grand corruption is defined as acts committed at a high level of government that distort policies or the central functioning of the state, enabling leaders to benefit at the expense of the public good. Lack of service provision to citizens is directly linked to corruption and waste of public resources. There is a syndicate of cartels and mafia that has taken hold of our economy and it is such cartels propagating and enabling such grand corruption.

The Coalition – email: [thecivilactionssd@gmail.com](mailto:thecivilactionssd@gmail.com)





## 9. Peace and Socioeconomic Development not Consolidated

Article 36 is a very important Article, but it is also violated.

36 (2) It states that All levels of government shall:

- a) promote and consolidate peace and create a secure and stable political environment for socio-economic development.

Peace, security, and stable political environment do not exist in South Sudan and the political leaders have been creating chaos, political discord, violence, and promoting divisions among the people of South Sudan and rendering them backward and distraught.

- b) initiate a comprehensive process of national reconciliation and healing that shall promote national harmony, unity, and peaceful co-existence among the people of South Sudan.

The government and political leaders cannot reconcile among themselves, and they therefore have no capacity or the political will to promote national harmony and peaceful coexistence.

## 10. National Wealth Not Equitably Shared

South Sudan's wealth has been wasted and pocketed by a few. This is contrary to Article 37 (3) of our constitution, which mandates that "The State shall ensure that National wealth is equitably shared among all levels of government for the welfare of the people." The leaders of South Sudan have squandered all the resources of the country through grand corruption schemes. Individuals linked to power have taken all the national wealth for themselves and they have impoverished the country. The people of South Sudan are a lot poorer now than they were before independence.

## 11. Failed

South Sudan was born with a huge reserve of international goodwill. Owing to bad leadership and political mismanagement, such a goodwill was frustrated and now, it has turned into conflict. South Sudan quickly moved from being a darling to a scornful member of the international community and quickly earning international sanctions, arms embargo, and travel restrictions on key government officials. This has also resulted in development aid being withdrawn together with technical assistance.

## Article 2: What has been done?

The crisis in South Sudan continues to persist despite several attempts to find lasting solutions by South Sudanese, the region and the international community. Some of the major initiatives to resolve the conflicts included the following:

1. **SPLM Reunification Agreement:** In 2014/15, three factions of the SPLM (SPLM, SPLM-IO and SPLM-FDs) that splintered following the December 2013 crisis met in Arusha Tanzania with the aim to resolve their differences and reunite the party. The three factions of the SPLM

*The Coalition – email: [thecivilactionssd@gmail.com](mailto:thecivilactionssd@gmail.com)*





party were convinced that reunification and reconciliation of the party was the key to the resolution of the crisis in South Sudan; committed all the three SPLM Groups to reunification and reconciliation of the party and subsequently signed the Reunification Agreement on January 21, 2015. However, the three factions were never reunited, and this agreement was not meaningfully implemented to date.

2. **The Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (ARCSS):** Following nearly twenty months of negotiations, mediated by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the parties signed the ARCSS in August 2015 as a framework for peace in South Sudan. Within eleven months, the Agreement collapsed, a renewed fighting ensued, and the agreement could not be fully implemented, and this prompted IGAD to call for revitalization of the ARCSS.
3. **The Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS).** Since it was signed in September 2018, the R-ARCSS implementation remains slow and inconsistent. This causes the implementation of the R-ARCSS to fall below its intended objective to resolve the conflict in the country. This was also the case with the 2015 ARCSS which collapsed just few months after the start of its implementation. The current leadership has very poor record in implementing agreements.
4. **The South Sudan National Dialogue (ND):** President Salva Kiir Mayardit initiated a ND that engaged thousands of South Sudanese across the country and in refugee settlements in the region in discussions on what went wrong and how the problems could be fixed. Since the ND concluded in November 2020, there has been no clarity on the implementation of its outcome resolutions.

It is therefore apparent that without meaningful implementation, these four initiatives offer no solutions to the crisis in South Sudan. This therefore calls for a new approach to end this persistent violent power struggle in the country.

### Article 3: Purpose and Principles of the Coalition

1. The **People's Coalition for Civil Action** aims to mobilize the people of South Sudan to aspire for a nation united to build a peaceful, free, just, equitable and prosperous democratic society. A nation that is at peace from within, with the neighbors and the world.
2. The Coalition shall pursue these objectives using non-violent means and methods to organize the people of South Sudan for civil action.
3. To achieve these aspirations of the people of South Sudan, The Coalition proclaims the following principles and strategic objectives:

#### a. **Creating a stable political system**

*The Coalition – email: [thecivilactionssd@gmail.com](mailto:thecivilactionssd@gmail.com)*





- i. **Consent:** In order to build a stable political system in our beloved country, the Republic of South Sudan, those who aspire to lead must seek consent of the people of South Sudan.
- ii. **Consensus:** A fundamental value of our traditional governing system is the idea that leadership is collective and therefore major decisions must be made after **seeking and building consensus**.
- iii. **Egalitarianism:** The South Sudanese live in an egalitarian society in which all individuals are born; free, equal, and all members of society have a right to equal opportunities. Our traditional society has no social classes and people happily live the same life. We believe this to be an extremely important social value that must guide governance and policies of any government that derives its power through consent and consensus.
- iv. **Dialogue:** The best construction tool at the disposal of any nation or society is dialogue. In an egalitarian society, no one individual dictates the functioning of the society, so the equals must dialogue to arrive at consensus and to achieve their consent. Dialogue is fundamental in repairing a divided and distraught society like South Sudan.
- v. **Public Interest:** The legitimacy of any government and any political power rests in serving public interest. No government, therefore, should come into being in South Sudan that seeks parochial or chauvinistic interest. Public interest is the idea that policy intervention must serve the common good, the general welfare and the security and well-being of everyone in South Sudan, not just a selected group or section of our society.
- vi. **Shared Leadership:** Traditionally speaking, many communities in South Sudan are led by councils of elders or councils of chiefs. There are few communities that are led by monarchical leadership. It follows therefore, that leadership in South Sudan is a shared responsibility and so dictatorship, totalitarianism, and authoritarian systems are in direct contravention of our traditional values and must be rejected and resisted whenever they try to take hold in South Sudan.
- vii. **Multiparty Democracy:** Shared leadership, egalitarianism, dialogue, seeking consent, and building consensus are all aimed at achieving greater public interest. Multiparty democracy is the idea that political parties that seek to form the government through consent of the people of South Sudan must compete in seeking that consent. Each party must have an equal opportunity to present its ideas and be given consent to form the government through democratic elections.

## b. Building Poverty Free Society

- i. **Ending Abject Poverty:** South Sudan economy must aim at lifting all our people out of abject poverty and improving their standard of living.
- ii. **Agriculture as Economic Backbone:** South Sudan has a comparative advantage in agriculture as it has vast arable land and water resources.







- iii. **Attaining Food Security:** The first step in ending abject poverty is to ensure that all the people of South Sudan have stable and sufficient source of food. South Sudan has the potential to produce enough food for its population. It will be our priority to invest in food production, storage, and transport capacities.
- iv. **Employment Opportunities:** The people of South Sudan who have entered the work force age must find work. Work is the best way to end poverty and dependency on humanitarian aid and to reduce conflict. The economy we aspire to build is one that creates sustainable jobs for the young and offers stable livable wages. The current public employees do not earn livable wage and it is our intention to call for change of this predicament.
- v. **Education for All:** The ability to find work and to climb out of poverty is a function of developed human capacity, which is only possible through education. We call for a free for all basic to secondary education and affordable and accessible quality tertiary education. If we invest in our people, they will generate more wealth and therefore climb out of poverty and thereby achieving prosperity for all.
- vi. **Healthcare for all:** Health is a fundamental right of all. We call for high-quality and affordable primary healthcare for all the people of South Sudan.
- vii. **Building Economic Infrastructure:** To achieve the dual objective of economic growth and inter-generational equity, we call for investment of resources from oil and minerals rents in building economic infrastructure.
- viii. **Fighting Corruption:** South Sudan cannot develop economically and socially with the current scourge of corruption. We strive to enforce implementation of anticorruption policy in public institutions, especially in the oil and mining sectors and the procurement procedures and public financial management.
- ix. **Phaseout Food Aid:** For nearly 40 years, the people of South Sudan have depended on food handouts from international aid agencies. We call for an end to dependency on food aid within the shortest time and make our people food secure and self-sufficient.

### c. Securing our People and their Property

- i. **Building A Professional Army:** South Sudan national army as it stands is an amalgamation of former liberation army (SPLA) and various militia groups with divided loyalties and little to no military training. This poses a great danger to state viability and political stability. We advocate for a professional national army with undivided loyalty to the constitution and the nation.
- ii. **Comprehensive Civilian Disarmament:** small arms and light weapons are widely distributed among the civilian populations in South Sudan. These arms and light weapons have wreaked havoc in the rural communities and posing a great danger and instability to our people. A comprehensive, simultaneous, and incentivized general civilian disarmament is a priority.





- iii. **Protecting our Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity:** We stand for full protection of our sovereignty and territorial integrity of our country and its borders.
- iv. **Ensuring Internal Cohesion:** The people of South Sudan have not rested since the signing of the CPA in 2005. Crises of cattle raiding, communal violence, rebellions, and the civil war have caused so much social disruptions. Internal cohesion is an extremely important ingredient in fighting poverty and in spurring economic growth and development. We call for a comprehensive policy in promoting social cohesion and restoring peace and stability at the level of communities in South Sudan.

#### d. Sociocultural Transformation

- i. **Protecting and Strengthening our Culture:** It does not take any supernatural gift of genius to realize that South Sudan needs a cultural liberation process. For far too long, our people have been suppressed and humiliated by foreign powers who proclaim cultural superiority to our own culture and subjecting pockets of our society to some degree of cultural inferiority complex. This must end, and it is time for South Sudan to reassert its rich culture while naturally acquiring and adopting positive attributes of human progress from others.

While this process of reasserting, our cultural values is ongoing, we must have a foresight to recognize that globalization and technological explosion in information technology is going to pull the whole towards a mono-cultural world. This culture is likely to be a western culture. However, if we make this recognition early enough, we can take advantage of this technological advances to assert our own culture at home while also making efforts to share it with the world.

- ii. **Indigenization and Nationalization Strategy:** a nationality project is proposed here as a ten-year national program that will promote a strong national identity and national culture of South Sudan. This is what we called **Indigenization and Nationalization Strategy** under the theme: **Our Cultural Identity is our Dignity, and our Nation is our Pride.** Under this program, there will be five broad categories that will be resourced to promote a national cultural identity.
  1. **Education:** education is the primary means through which normative values, ethics, and morals are instill in the young generation and so the educational curricula of South Sudan must be revised to promote national identity and national culture and pacify the society. Education in this sense is both formal and informal and so cultural institutions such as marriages, initiations, games, sports, and festivals should be promoted nationally. Massive education campaign should be designed to ensure that everyone can read and write their mother tongue while an indigenous language is being developed.
  2. **Indigenizing Religious Institutions:** The second part of this is to embark on indigenization of the religious programs to promote faith while infusing relevant cultural values into the religious institutions. Translation of the Bible or Koran into local languages is one step towards indigenization while composing and compiling



hymns in local languages is another. Dancing and singing and sporting should also reflect popular culture within the society.

3. **Nationalizing Traditional Rites of Passages:** The third aspect of the project is the nationalization of the initiation program for both boys and girls. Every year in South Sudan, boys at different parts of the country go through a traditional ritual where they become men charged with important societal responsibilities. In most South Sudanese communities, these boys become warriors whose enemies are their neighbors. This cultural practice is an important cultural event that makes people who they are in terms of their identity. However, the only problem with this is the fact that this cultural practice is used also to promote violence among communities.

It is proposed here that this process should be nationalized in a sense that it should be timed appropriately and while the boys are undergoing this process, cultural experts should go into the communities to graduate these boys and girls and talk to them about important national values and norms, including peaceful co-existence with the neighbors and promotion of trade and cultural integration. There should also be several National Youth days spread throughout the year where important youth events are celebrated nationally and youth are invited to participate in the same events where similar messages are passed to them about building a national identity and national culture of South Sudan.

4. **Promoting South Sudan's Culinary Culture:** The fourth element of this program is culinary. South Sudanese people have a unique culinary culture that should be promoted nationally with the hope that it shall become a regional and international favorite. It is simple, organize culinary competition regionally and nationally every year and give awards to those who prepare the best traditional dishes and let them present their recipes to the organizing committee and such recipes can be compiled and published in a national culinary book. South Sudan should also establish culinary schools to produce among the best cooks and chefs to reinforce this cultural undertaking. Hotels, cafes, and restaurants should be encouraged to make sure that their menus reflect the national culinary book recipes.

The advantage of this is that our people would be eating food that their bodies can recognize and in the long run cut down on obesity and discourage dietary diseases like diabetes and food allergies. The other advantage is that South Sudan would be among nations in the world that has a known peculiar culinary culture, and this may lead to massive employment for our people both in country and outside the country, especially if the world acquired the taste for South Sudanese food. More importantly, this would be one way to surely protect our cultural heritage and influence the world.

5. **Promoting our music and dance:** The fifth element is music and traditional dances. South Sudan has a set of unique musical instruments and great singers. The point is that we are not going to compete in the new pop culture of music and dancing. Doing this would be a clear recipe for the death of our culture. The value added for the South Sudanese music and dance is to use existing national dances and traditional songs and reward those who do well in this area. National dance and music festival could be held,





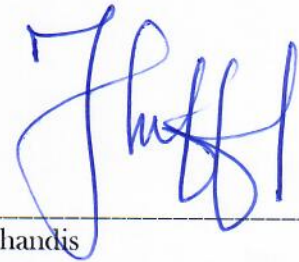
and prizes given out to better performing teams or individual artists. This would be a unique music and dance and the rest of the world would want to listen to it and adopt it and this is clearly one way we can promote our cultural values and build a stronger national identity. We want to be known as Kenyans and Ethiopians runners in this area. We could also compete in the running business, but our comparative advantage is in the singing and dancing.

6. **National Dressing Attire:** The sixth element is in traditional dressing, weaving, body decoration and ornaments. The way our people dress, the way they paint their faces, what they do with their hair and to some degree how they scarify their bodies is a unique cultural heritage that must be cherished. The point is this, our new economic programs must be aimed at using our traditional heritage to manufacture garments, jewelry, and other ornaments to reflect our cultural touch and taste. This way, our children will grow up not wanting to be like 50 Cent or Michael Jackson, rather, they would want to be like Kong, Kembe, and Larson Angok.

Signed:



Abraham Awolich  
Think Tanks & Academia



Rajab Mohandis  
Civil Society



Kuel Aguer  
South Sudan Intellectuals Group



Edward Achiek  
South Sudanese Diaspora