

## REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN

### The President

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#### PRESS STATEMENT

Delivered at Government Secretariat Juba, South Sudan - 28/03/2022

Ladies and gentlemen of the Press

Good afternoon:

I come before you today to affirm my government commitment to peace in our country. In many of my public remarks, I have pledged that I would not deliberately return this country to war and I remain committed to this pledge.

That said, there are challenges we need to confront honestly as a people along with our partners to maintain total peace and bring prosperity to our people.

One challenge that has paralysed our progress is the negative narrative cultivated during the war about the Government. This same negative narrative has depicted many senior government officials in bad light. For those who followed events in our country, they know that this narrative has external dimension, but it is mostly rooted in our internal political competition, which was and still driven by personal ambition that does not factor the best interest of the country into consideration.

We are all aware that in the period between 2013 and 2016, many atrocities were committed by both sides in the war. These unfortunate events were investigated by eminent personalities like President Obasanjo who submitted his report to the African Union. His report found allegations of war crimes and crimes against humanity. Within the country, Justice John Wol Makech and his team also

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**The President**

investigated this dark chapter in our country and came up with the report that contradicted some of President Obasanjo's findings.

Not only that, this situation inflamed by several individuals wrote books on the issue of atrocities committed during the war in our country. While we cannot entirely deny that crimes were committed to some extent, majority of the books in circulation today contain unreliable information that we know is being used when discussing South Sudan.

Ladies and Gentleman of the Press,

I am aware of the fact that for our country to move forward, we as the people must confront what took place during the war by telling the truth about it. That is the reason why I directed the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs in my New Year's address to establish the Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing as stipulated in the Revitalized Peace Agreement. The establishment of Truth and Reconciliation is also demanded by our National Human Rights Commission.

The objective of this Truth and Reconciliation Commission is to receive and document complains and eyewitness reports of the victims of the tragic events in both 2013 and 2016.

Personally, it is in my best interest for the people of South Sudan, especially the victims, to know exactly what took place during those two unfortunate events. Having said this, I would like to state that we are aware of, and acknowledge the views of those who see the establishment of Hybrid Court for South Sudan as the priority. However, we also strongly believe prioritizing punitive justice will take away from the goal of reconciliation, which is what is needed the most in our country.

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Press,

The Government do not deny, minimize or shy away from prosecuting those who committed crimes. We have demonstrated this through our actions. We have prosecuted people and imposed considerable prison sentences to those who were found guilty, including our own soldiers.

I am also mindful that what we have done and the position we have taken on issues related to human rights violations are not shared by some of our partners. At times, this creates a situation where our views are misrepresented in the reports compiled by them. This situation cannot serve the interest of the victims who suffer the atrocities, if any, it politicizes their victimhood. For us as the Government, we believe that more can be achieved if we can work collectively with our partners to strengthen the capacity of our institutions. We do not believe that it is helpful for each party to work independently.

Providing capacity building and technical assistance locally in areas related to human rights protection for example, can go a long way in improving the situation. This path can deliver more results than the current reports written independently by our partners and circulated internationally with the sole goal of applying pressure on the Government. The Government is open to genuine partnership that addresses real challenges, but it equally objects to any attempt to undermine it work by those who choose to operate outside established institutions.

With all we are going through, real cooperation with our partners is an ideal path for us. For instance, we are faced with prevailing insecurity in certain parts of the country, driven mostly by cattle-rustling, inter-communal violence, flooding, food security issues induced by climate change. These are areas where we can collaborate to achieved desired results for the people. We also need this real partnership in the implementation of the Revitalized Peace Agreement, which we are committed to implement despite the challenges we face.

Ladies and gentleman of the press,

The Revitalized Peace Agreement we are implementing is an ambitious document. This fact is often discounted by those who think it should be implemented overnight. The full implementation of this agreement cannot be done without having a sustained dialogue among the parties. In the process of dialogue, we as parties to the agreement at times hit minor bumps on the road.

In light of this, I would like our people to consider the recent SPLM-IO Political Bureau Resolution that came out from its meeting held on 11-14 of March 2022, and other communications they have shared with the public as part of sustained dialogue I just mentioned. These kinds of conflicting positions are expected in the implementation of a complex Agreement like ours. To ensure that no one panics from these, I am assuring you that the implementation of the Revitalized Peace Agreement is on track. We all consider this Agreement as the path to our stability and I am committed to working with our partners to implement it.

For the implementation of the Revitalized Peace Agreement to be genuine, we need transparency on the root causes of the conflict. It is for this reason that I am directing the National Security Service and its partner, the BRL Law Firm to declassify all information about the conflict's genesis in their possession (intercepts, audios and personal accounts).

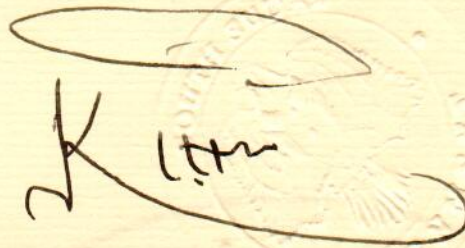
This is very important so that the people of South Sudan know the truth and judge for themselves from the position of this knowledge. We must say the truth, because genuine reconciliation has its basis on it. This will also support the process of healing in our country.

Having said that, I need to state clearly that those who may be implicated by the declassified information that is going to be released are guaranteed presidential

pardon. So, there is no cause for alarm over this. All we are interested in is for the public to know the truth about the background of the conflict in our country.

I hope after the release of this information, we can all move forward with permanent peace building that will create harmony and prosperity in our country. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen of the press.

I am going to take 2 or 3 questions before we end this session.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Salva Kiir', is written over a large, faint, circular official seal. The seal features a central emblem and the text 'REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN' and 'LIBERTY - PROSPERITY' around the perimeter.

**Salva Kiir Mayardit**  
President,  
Republic of South Sudan  
Juba, South