



REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN
REVITALIZED TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL
UNITY
OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

GENDER & YOUTH CLUSTER

26th April, 2022

GBV Court Visit Speech

Right Hon. Speaker of the TNLA, Jemma Nunu Nkumba

Chief Justice, Lordship Chan Reech Madut

Hon. Ministers in attendance

Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General

Distinguished guests

Members of the press

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Afternoon

It is an honor for me to be here with you as we continue to reaffirm our commitment to address the critical concern of Gender and sexual-based violence in this country. This is an issue at the core of our peace, stability, and development as a nation.

We live in a country that emerged from the struggle. The burning desire for the right to self-determination, dignity, equality, and justice was the light that guided us towards our liberation and, eventually, our independence.

Because of this history, that has been stained by inequality and injustice, we must continue to protect the rights that so many have paid the ultimate price to achieve.

The extent to which we as a society tolerate gender inequality, will ultimately reflect upon the health and wellbeing of our nation as a whole.

Although it may be a complex, subject to approach, particularly here in South Sudan, as the chairperson of the Gender and Youth Cluster, I pledge to work hard to see to it that those who harm and abuse others are brought to justice.

The inauguration of this gender-based violence and juvenile court in December 2020 was a significant milestone in achieving this.

This court not only facilitates access to justice for survivors, it also safeguards individual liberty, privacy, security, and human dignity.

I hope that by visiting this court today, we can highlight the strength of this institution and elevate public confidence in our judicial process, especially among women and girls.

However, Gender-based violence is not only a legal matter, it is also sociopolitical in nature and requires the attention of healthcare providers, law enforcement agencies, community leaders, and elders, working in close collaboration with the justice system.

In order for survivors to feel safe reporting their cases, it is important that we create a conducive environment in which they come forward. I hope that all agencies and practitioners that deal with this issue are able to have a desk or department, that is trained and dedicated to handling sensitive GBV cases. This means having more, well-trained female first responders to GBV cases, especially in law enforcement.

Although I spoke with the IGP about having a GBV desk operated by female officers, we must continue in this spirit in all relevant agencies.

I have noted that this court takes a survivor-centered approach that provides services tailored to the immediate and specific needs of the victims.

I firmly believe that one of the most critical services that can be provided to both survivors and perpetrators is psycho-social support. Counseling and healing are important tools for creating a safe environment and helping to challenge the norms around Gender-based violence.

I often say, in this country, we are ALL traumatized. We suffer from unhealed generations of trauma brought about by conflict and the deep sorrow of loss. As a result, we are at each other throats because we have not been able to face each other with truth and forgiveness. Trauma is like a wound that will only intensify in both pain and consequence if left untreated.

Since I came to the office as your Vice President, my staff and I have regularly been taken through stress management and coping presentations. We learnt about the definitions, the

causes and the different types of stress from a counsellor (who is here with us today).

These presentations have helped my staff, and even myself, to feel more relaxed, confident and able to respond effectively to issues in the work environment.

Integrating these types of mental health and psycho-social support in GBV prevention and response is key.

Finally, it is the courage and strength of the survivors that drives this court forward. We must, therefore, continue to make it a priority to create safe spaces for women, girls and all survivors to come forward and report their cases.

Together with our partners, we have made advances in ensuring that access to justice is a reality for the vulnerable in our society. But there is still more that must be done.

I continue to dream about a society free from Sexual and Gender Based violence, where women and girls can live free from discrimination and inequality. However, in order for this dream to come true, we must all continue to reaffirm our commitment to this issue.

I am inspired by the work of my colleagues in government, our partners and all those who are working institutionally and personally to stand against Gender-Based violence. May we all remain strong and united in the face of this social menace.

Thank you all for your attendance and attention.

