



## **Condolence and Farewell to Professor Leonzio Angole Onek**

For Immediate release

July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019

The People's Democratic Movement (PDM) is extremely saddened to offer its sincere and deeply heartfelt condolences to the family of late Dr. Leonzio Angole Onek who suddenly died on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2019 after a short illness. PDM offers its condolences to the people of South Sudan, and to his immediate Acholi and Equatoria communities. He will be remembered as a great scholar, a seasoned politician, above all a faithful husband and a loving father.

Dr. Leonzio Angole Onek was born and bred in ladit Onek's family of the South Sudanese Acholi community in Magwi. He was a distinctive and distinguished academician of his generation. He first taught Biochemistry at Kenyan universities before returning home to his native country after the signing of the Comprehension Peace Agreement in 2005. However, he came to prominence during the search for peace in Uganda between the rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the Ugandan government army the UPDF. As the Chairman of the Equatoria Civic Fund, he spearheaded peace talks between the warring parties. This was not only one of his noble gestures and contributions to peace, but the truth was that Dr Onek was much more concerned about the plight of his people and his home town of Magwi, which was part of Torit County. Most parts of Northern Uganda neighbouring Magwi were the battlefields between the LRA and UPDF. The region was at the same time a frontline between the battling Khartoum forces and the SPLA. This region saw a lot of suffering, especially between 1999 and 2005.

In 2006 Pax Christi chose and delegated Dr Onek to mediate between the LRA and the UPDF. The peace efforts involved the government of South Sudan as a co mediator, but it collapsed because of mistrust between the parties to the conflict.

When peace came to South Sudan, Prof Dr. Onek returned to the regional capital Juba and joined the University of Juba as the Dean of the Applied and Industrial Sciences. Following the outbreak of War between the government and Dr. Riak Machar's protection forces in 2016, Dr. Onek was falsely accused of supporting Dr. Machar and was subsequently jailed by the National Security Service of South Sudan (NSS). He was only later released without any charges laid on him on December 7, 2016, when his health had deteriorated badly. After his release from detention, he fled to Nairobi, where he had lived with family until his untimely and sudden death from ill health.

While in Nairobi, conscious of the plight of his people back home and in the region, who are suffering horrors of war as IDPs and as refugees in camps in neighbouring Uganda and Kenya, Dr. Onek offered to contribute to the peace process mediated by IGAD in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa. He joined and represented the Peoples' Democratic Movement (PDM) and became the Movement's Head of Delegation to the first talks in the Khartoum leg where he mediated part of the peace process on Security arrangements.



Unfortunately, the talks failed and PDM did not support the Khartoum Declaration of Agreement that culminated into signing of the so-called Khartoum Peace Agreement. It is worth noting that Dr Onek, like other people of conscience, did his uttermost best to genuinely contribute to the peace efforts, even as he still vividly remembered the harshness of the war behind bars for false accusations in Juba.

Despite all the challenges he faced, Prof. Onek's commitments were to bring peace and welfare to his people. His contributions over the years from student days and throughout his distinguished career amply testify to that. Dr Onek was a humble peace lover, though he staunchly resisted the failed policies of the government in Juba. Prof. Leonzio Onek had unflinching faith in his pen, which he deployed most effectively to fight against the unlawful regime in Juba and its divisive policies. His intellectual faculties and charisma were a potent and most effective tool to advance democracy and freedom of his people.

Though, his recent sudden and unexpected ill-health lead to his early untimely demise, Dr. Onek's spirit was never broken down. The illness, which he finally succumbed to far and away from home, snatched a true and loyal patriot from us. He swallowed all the bitterness of respected Professors being needlessly humiliated in the country, and left the country because of unworthy treatment and humiliation by his own country's rulers, who do not value education or those highly qualified and endowed with knowledgeable and expertise to serve the strategic interest of their country from a position of leadership.

Professor Onek is survived by his wife Judith Kassara Okumu with her children in Kenya and his wife Angela Onek and her children in the United Kingdom.

PDM is without sufficient words and feeling to express our loss of irreplaceable talent, leader and finest of educated men in our country, and who possessed immense intellect, integrity and honourable demeanour, and served his country with unparalleled distinction and conviction.

Professor Leo Agole Onek, comrade in struggle, May Your Soul Rest in Eternal Peace. PDM shall carry your ambition and aspirations to make your people free from tyranny and oppression.



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