



SUDAN PEOPLE'S LIBERATION MOVEMENT/ARMY  
SPLM/SPLA (IO)  
CHAIRMAN & COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

---

**STATEMENT OF THE CHAIRMAN AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE SPLM/SPLA (IO)**

**THE FIRST VICE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC**

**AT THE SPLM/SPLA (IO) 6<sup>TH</sup> NATIONAL CONFERENCE**

**December 1, 2020**

- .....
- 1) COMRADE, THE INTERIM SECRETARY GENERAL, REGINA JOSEPH KABA
  - 2) COMRADES: THE MEMBERS OF POLITICAL BUREAU,
  - 3) COMRADES: THE MEMBERS OF NATIONAL LIBERATION COUNCIL,
  - 4) HONOURABLE NATIONAL MINISTERS AND DEPUTY MINISTERS OF REVITALIZED TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY,
  - 5) HONOURABLE STATE GOVERNORS,
  - 6) MEMBERS OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS,
  - 7) COMRADES: NOMINATED TO TRANSITIONAL NATIONAL LEGISLATURE,
  - 8) COMRADES: NOMINATED TO STATE DEPUTY GOVERNORS, CHAIRPERSONS OF COMMISSIONS, ADVISORS, MINISTERS, MEMBERS TO STATE ASSEMBLIES, AND COUNTY COMMISSIONERS,
  - 9) COMRADES: MEMBERS OF PEACE IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS,
  - 10) MEMBERS OF THE PRESS CORPS
  - 11) DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

**GOOD MORNING!**

1. It is my pleasure to welcome all of you to the SPLM/SPLA (IO) 6<sup>th</sup> National Conference. I must thank all of you, especially those who travelled long distances from states and counties despite the many challenges including lack of transport, bad roads, insecurity, poor weather and floods that have affected our country to attend this historic Conference.
2. I would like to thank the members of the Leadership: The Political Bureau, the National Liberation Council and state branches for sailing and steering the Movement through

and during very difficult moments of our history since the inception of the SPLM/SPLA (IO) on April 18, 2014 in Nasir in Upper Nile State. You have been working diligently under difficult circumstances to promote peace, security, law and order in your respective capacities with limited means at your disposal.

3. I also would like to take this opportunity to whole-heartedly thank and appreciate every member of the Movement present here and those who could not make it to this Conference as we recognize and value every sacrifice and contribution made towards achieving lasting peace, justice, equality and prosperity for our country.
4. I would like to reiterate our vision to create a prosperous, peaceful and united country guided by principles of democracy, justice and liberty anchored on a federal system of governance where Human Rights and fundamental freedoms are respected.
5. At this juncture, I salute our fallen heroes, heroines and also the members of the armed forces of the SPLM/SPLA (IO) who are currently enduring hardships in their different locations of Assembly Areas, Cantonment Sites and Training Centers. The sacrifices you make to achieve peace and justice for our country is the ultimate necessity for laying the foundation of a true independent, prosperous and democratic society in which all our diversities shall peacefully coexist.
6. Last but not least, allow me to thank the members of the Organizing Committee and those who have contributed in one way or another to make this Conference possible.

**Dear Comrades, invited Guests;**

7. It has been a tradition for the SPLM/SPLA (IO) to hold annual National Conferences for the past seven years. These events have enabled the leadership of the Movement to come together to deliberate and dialogue on critical and important policy issues pertaining to the Movement and the nation including peace processes. The purpose of the 6<sup>th</sup> National Conference is reflected in its theme: *"Building and Sustaining Peace through Implementation of R-ARCSS."*
8. The parties to the Agreement are currently engaged in the process of implementation of R-ARCSS with the overarching objectives of achieving sustainable peace, security and transition to democracy. This is in line with the African Union (AU) theme, **"silencing the guns...2020"** as well as the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolution 2532 (2020) on Universal Ceasefire in conflict areas. Thus, the security of our people and their property depends on ensuring the implementation of the Agreement and compliance with these themes.
9. The R-ARCSS offers the best opportunity for the country to put an end to the tragic civil war and political violence that have engulfed and wrecked the country for the past seven years. The R-ARCSS also offers the people of South Sudan an opportunity for reconciliation, healing and development. There is no alternative to building and sustaining peace in the country other than the R-ARCSS.

**Dear Delegates and Invited Guests;**

10. On the dawn of the independence, the people of South Sudan had high hopes that their aspirations for a united, peaceful, prosperous and democratic state would be realized. However, barely two years of the independence the country was plunged into a tragic civil war on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2013. The civil war dashed all their hopes. Similarly, our regional and international partners, who had walked with us the long path to independence, were disappointed.
11. The political disagreements that had been brewing within the ruling Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement (SPLM) over issues of vision, direction, internal democracy and governance were the triggers of political crisis in the country. On December 6, 2013, members of Political Bureau publically expressed in a press conference these disagreements. The issues raised were as follows:
  - i. Rampant insecurity manifested in the inter-communal conflicts and killings with impunity throughout the country, including the capital, leading to needless loss of innocent lives and property;
  - ii. Institutionalized tribalism that engulfed the entire sector of the public service, limiting opportunities and depriving those who do not control the sector;
  - iii. Rampant corruption and theft of public funds;
  - iv. Lack of socio-economic development, resulting in acute poverty and dependency on humanitarian aid;
  - v. Disregard for constitutionalism and rule of law manifested in the dismissal of democratically elected officials, including Governors, thus undermining the will of the people;
  - vi. Poor regional and international relations that undermined the goodwill of our partners and friends who stood beside us; and
  - vii. Last but not least, loss of vision and ideological direction by the ruling SPLM party.
12. The raising of these issues publically on December 6, 2013 was construed to be a coup attempt and consequently triggered violence on December 15, 2013 that turned political conflict into a civil war. The war led to massive loss of lives, destruction of property and displacement of millions of people.

**Distinguished Delegates and Invited Guests;**

13. The SPLM/SPLA (IO) was formed on the 18<sup>th</sup> April 2014 from the ashes of the tragic war. The SPLM/SPLA (IO) mission is to respond to this national tragedy and turn it into an opportunity to peacefully address political, social, economic, state and nation building crisis to achieve unity, reconciliation, healing, social cohesion, and to restore the dignity of our people.

14. It is for this reason, and as part of its mission, we signed a number of Agreements including Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA) and Agreement on the Status of Political Detainees on 23 January 2014 respectively; Agreement on Humanitarian Matters on 6 May 2014; and a political framework Agreement that paved way for a negotiated political settlement signed on the 9 May 2014. Consequently, the Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (ARCSS) was signed on 17<sup>th</sup> August 2015. Unfortunately, the ARCSS of 2015 collapsed.
15. Despite the challenges that the SPLM/SPLA (IO) faced following the collapse of ARCSS in 2016, the Movement, in its quest for peace, continued to pursue a peaceful settlement of the conflict. In efforts to resuscitate the collapsed ARCSS, the SPLM/SPLA (IO) engaged in diplomatic activities with regional and international partners, namely IGAD member states, East African Community (EAC), AU, EU, UN, Troika and IGAD Partners Forum.
16. Finally, IGAD convened a High-Level Revitalization Forum (HLRF). The process of the HLRF culminated into the signing of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) on September 12, 2018.

#### **Distinguished Delegates and Invited Guests;**

17. The SPLM/SPLA (IO), because of its commitment to peace and the implementation of the Agreement, took the risk and dispatched its members assigned to the implementation mechanisms to Juba on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2018 without any security arrangements in place.
18. The Pre-Transitional tasks of the Agreement were not completed in the first 8 months. This warranted an extension for 6 months and further 100 days, making the Pre-Transitional Period 17 months and 10 days. Despite the many extensions to the Pre-Transitional period, critical tasks of the Agreement remain unimplemented including the Unification of Forces and Transitional Security Arrangements. Reverting the country to the former ten states was the only task accomplished.
19. Because the SPLM/SPLA (IO) is committed to the Agreement it had to agree to the commencement of the Transitional Period on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2020 and to the formation of RTGoNU without the completion of the critical tasks outlined in the Agreement most importantly the Security Arrangements.
20. As a result of failure to meet datelines and requirements of implementation matrix, the following are some of the critical tasks still pending:
  - a) Appointment of the Governor of Upper Nile State;
  - b) Unification and Deployment of the Necessary Unified Forces;
  - c) Reconstitution of Transitional Legislature;
  - d) Completion of Formation of RTGoNU;
  - e) Reconstitution of the National Petroleum and Gas Commission and other Economic Sector Institutions as per the Agreement;

- f) Devolution of Powers and Resources to States and Counties;
- g) Drafting and Review of National Legislation;
- h) Establishment of Ad hoc Judicial Reform Committee;
- i) Permanent Constitution Making Process;
- j) Implementation of Chapter Five (Transitional Justice);
- k) Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration and
- l) Voluntary Repatriation and Resettlement of IDPs.

**Distinguished Delegates, invited guests;**

21. While SPLM/SPLA (IO) remain steadfast and committed to the implementation of the Agreement in letter and spirit, we expect the same commitment from our peace partners so that we can better manage together the challenges impeding the implementation process. These challenges include:
- a) Limited resources; the Agreement clearly stipulates that the government avails resources for implementation of the peace Agreement. However, the government has only provided limited resources in an intermittent manner.
  - b) Lack of political will; there are many activities of the agreement that only require decision of the parties and do not need any substantial resources for implementation. Such activities include devolution of powers and resources, reconstitution of TNL, reforms, completion of the formation of RTGoNU, National Healing and Reconciliation, opening of humanitarian corridors, and opening of political space;
  - c) Lack of political space; in order to implement the peace Agreement and ensure transition to democracy, there is need to create a conducive environment that allows parties to exercise freedom of expression, association, and assembly. Political space is critical for the process of Truth, Reconciliation and Healing and peace dissemination;
  - d) The economic crises; the political uncertainties, weak economic institutions, dependency on oil revenue, high public debt, and limited foreign exchange flows continue to affect the economy. It is to be recalled that the parties signed an agreement on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2018 for the resumption of oil production in the areas affected by war purposely to fund the implementation of the Agreement. As a result, the economy rebound in 2018/2019 with real GDP growth at 5.8% in 2019, a huge increase from 0.5% in 2018, and inflation fell to record 24.5% in 2019 from 83.5% in 2018. Therefore, the government should allocate more funds for the implementation of the Agreement.
  - e) The first case in the country of the corona virus (Covid19) pandemic was discovered on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2020. Due to strict measures and protocols introduced to combat this pandemic, Covid19 impacted negatively on the economy, implementation of the peace Agreement, provision of services, and access to humanitarian assistance

- f) Unprecedented floods; seven out of ten states have been affected by the floods causing displacement of over a million people, destruction of homesteads and livelihoods. This disaster has exacerbated the already dire humanitarian situation and made delivery of relief services difficult as well as voluntary repatriation and resettlement of returnees thus impacting on the implementation of the Agreement;
- g) Widespread inter and intra-communal violence and insecurity leading to waves of unrest in Bahr el Ghazel and Upper Nile regions. This phenomenon is clearly a national security threat resulting into loss of lives and destruction of livelihoods and shifting focus away from the implementation of the peace Agreement;
- h) Political and administrative vacuum in the States caused by delays in agreeing on the allocation and application of responsibility sharing at the state and local government levels. This impasse has led to lapse in service delivery, and breakdown of law and order;
- i) Violations of the Agreement;
  - breaches of Permanent Ceasefire and Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA) in Maiwut and Maban counties in Upper Nile State, Wau county in Western Bahr El Ghazel State, Tumbura County in Western Equatoria State, lately in Kajokeji county of Central Equatoria State. The SSPDF committed these violations;
  - appointments without consultations;
  - the non-dissolution of ITGoNU National Legislature;
 These violations are a clear demonstration of lack of political will and commitment to implementation of Transitional Security Arrangements.
- j) Holdout groups; the presence of non-signatories to the agreement poses a threat to achieving sustainable peace and security in the country.

**Distinguished Delegates, invited Guests;**

22. It is the first time for SPLM/SPLA (IO) to hold its National Conference in the Capital Juba since its inception. This is a great milestone towards building sustainable peace and transition to democracy. The SPLM/SPLA (IO) would like to take this opportunity to congratulate its members and the people of South Sudan for this milestone. Despite the slow progress in the implementation of the Agreement, we are optimistic that peace shall prevail.
23. In this light, the Movement must prepare and re-organize itself to manage new challenges presented by the realities of the new dispensation. As the transitional period moves towards general elections as provided for in the Agreement, the Movement must complete its structures and institutions at all levels; National, States, Counties, Payams and Bomas. The time is opportune for the Movement to register all its members and

establish its offices at all levels. The Movement must open political cadre schools for training of its members.

24. Members are expected to abide by the principles outlined in the basic documents of the Movement namely; the Constitution, the Manifesto, the Internal Regulations and the Code of Conduct.

**Distinguished Delegates, invited Guests;**

Allow me to make the following recommendations:

**25. On the Implementation of R-ARCSS**

- Establishment of fund for the implementation of the Agreement and to be independently managed;
- Direct allocation of a fix amount from the oil revenue for the fund;
- Call for a donor conference to support the implementation of the Agreement;
- Hold parties accountable for actions of defectors that join them;
- Accelerate graduation of the Necessary Unified Forces and immediately commence phase II of the unification of forces;
- Ensure timely provision of logistics to cantonment and training centers;
- Ensure that the Rome talks are concluded successfully;
- Call for the appointment of the governor of Upper Nile State;
- Kick-start the economic sector and institutional reforms
- Establishment of the Ad hoc Judicial Reform Committee;
- Accelerate the establishment of the following funds: Special Reconstruction Fund (SRF), Student Fund, Social Security Fund, Women Enterprise Development Fund and Youth Enterprise Development Fund;

**26. On Economic Governance:**

- Put in place economic recovery programs;
- Liberalize the exchange rate to eliminate parallel market rate;
- Ensure prudent management of resources and compliance with public financial management regulations;
- Combat corruption;
- Diversify the economy;
- Ensure devolution of power and resources to States and Counties;
- Ensure resources are directed towards service delivery sector namely; health, education, water and sanitation etc.;
- Call upon the international partners to support efforts in combating Covid19;
- Declare all loans and contracts collateralized or guaranteed against oil;
- Develop debt management strategy;

## 27. Conclusion:

- In conclusion, allow me to reiterate, on behalf of the Movement and on my own behalf, our commitment to peace and its implementation. I again want to thank our gallant SPLM/SPLA (IO) forces for their patience and enduring all hardships to ensure peace prevails in our country;
- My special appreciation goes to all the Necessary Unified Forces awaiting graduation and deployment in the training centers for their endurance and steadfastness. I assure you of your graduation and deployment. And you will for sure serve your country;
- I call upon all the forces of the parties to continue observing the Cessation of Hostilities and the Permanent Ceasefire. The R-ARCSS is the only option we have for building and sustaining peace in our country.
- At this juncture, I would like to appreciate and acknowledge the role played by peace implementation mechanisms for pushing forward the process of implementation amidst scarce resources and other challenges;
- I would to whole-heartedly appreciate IGAD and the Guarantors for their tireless efforts to ensure that the peace Agreement was achieved and for remaining seized of its implementation. In this regard, I wish to express our solidarity with sisterly country Ethiopia, and urge for an expeditious peaceful resolution to the ongoing conflict in their country;
- I appreciate the roles played by international partners in support of peace in South Sudan; the AU, UN, EU, Troika, IGAD Partner Forum, without whose support, we would not have been where we are today;
- I would like to thank the Community of Saint E'gidio for accepting the mediation with the holdout group and for facilitating the process and I wish them success;
- I sincerely thank his Holiness Pope Francis, Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, the former Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland The Rt Reverend John Chalmers and the South Sudan Council of Churches for spiritual guidance and for supporting South Sudan peace process. The people of South Sudan look forward for your joint visit to South Sudan;
- Finally, I take this opportunity to congratulate H.E. President Salva Kiir Mayardit for his tireless efforts to bring peace to our sisterly country the Sudan, I also would like to thank Your Excellency for your efforts in the implementation of R-ARCSS. I urge you to do more in this course.

END