

Madame President, Your Excellencies, I would like to thank the United States for the opportunity to speak to you today on behalf of the Community Empowerment for Progress Organization (CEPO). I also speak on behalf of the South Sudan Civil Society Forum, a coalition of over 200 groups working to promote peace, freedom and respect for human dignity.

On 12 September, the people of South Sudan welcomed the news that the government and opposition groups had signed the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan. After close to five years of war, we **desperately** cling to the hope that the commitment of the parties is genuine, and that they will implement this agreement in a timely manner.

We know that whatever peace this agreement brings is **so** fragile.

On 14 September, the ceasefire monitoring body announced that it will conduct investigations into an alleged breach of the agreement in the Yei area. On 15 September, UNMISS announced that a peacekeeper had been shot by a government soldier, in the same area. These are worrying signs. Security Council must continue to insist on respect for the ceasefire.

Our peace is fragile because some opposition groups declined to sign the peace agreement, and others were not party to the negotiations. **The Security Council should call for IGAD to support continued outreach to and engagement with these groups, so that they also join hands to support this peace agreement.**

Even among the parties who did sign, there must be continued efforts to build trust and confidence among them, and to ensure that they can effectively work together in the same government, towards a common goal.

This peace is fragile because there is complete impunity within my country. Violations of human rights and humanitarian law rarely result in criminal prosecutions. We believe that there must be some effective and reliable deterrent to prevent rampant rape, extrajudicial killings, and obstruction of humanitarian access that have become too normal in South Sudan. **We urge the Security Council to insist on the immediate establishment of the Hybrid Court for South Sudan and to support efforts to strengthen the national criminal justice system.**

In South Sudan, competition over natural resources and cattle raiding regularly trigger local violence. The divisions between ethnic communities have grown so deep that it is sometimes difficult for us to coexist with each other. My organization is supporting communities to engage in dialogue and to solve differences without violence. **We urge the Security Council to call for increased support to local peacebuilding initiatives, and for the timely establishment of the Commission on Truth, Reconciliation, and Healing that is provided for in the peace agreement.**

The South Sudanese people are concerned by reports that, over the past month, Ugandan and Sudanese forces have entered the country. While Presidents Museveni and Bashir have played a role in helping parties reach this agreement, we are concerned that the presence of their forces could have negative security implications since still they are not yet under UN mandate. **Madame President, you must urge South Sudan's neighbours to respect the Security Council arms embargo and insist that any forces entering**

**under the pretext of the peace agreement come only as part of the Security Council mandated peace keeping mission.**

Madam President, we urge the Security Council to help ensure that our peace doesn't again fall apart.

Peace requires that we South Sudanese be honest with ourselves. We must be free to openly deliberate and debate the governance challenges we face—including corruption and impunity. The peace agreement provides specific roles for civil society, women and youth representatives in many of the bodies it forms. They will join bodies tasked with planning security sector reforms, monitoring the ceasefire, ensuring reconstruction in conflict-affected states, and providing reparations to those most affected by violence. But in a context where critical voices are silent, where peace, human rights and political activists such as Dong Samuel, Aggrey Idri, Peter Biar, Bashir Ahmed and so many others are disappeared or arbitrarily detained, no one will be free to contribute effectively to these bodies or to speak up when the agreement is not being implemented. **Please continue your calls for respect for of freedom of expression and for the release of those who are arbitrarily detained.**

South Sudanese women participated in the negotiation of this agreement, and one of their major achievements is the increase of required women's participation in government from 25 to 35 percent. This is something to celebrate, but it is also a call to action: to ensure that it is effectively implemented, and that women are able to participate equally in decision making. The Security Council should call for **all parties to uphold their commitment to women's full and meaningful participation in the implementation of the Agreement as well as in the government overall.** The implementation and monitoring of South Sudan's National Action Plan on 1325 can also contribute towards achieving this goal.

**We urge the Security Council to....**

- a) Pressure the parties to the agreement to honour the ceasefire and implement it in a timely manner.
- b) Ensure that humanitarian access and safety of humanitarian workers remains a top priority.
- c) Accelerate efforts to ensure transitional justice in South Sudan.
- d) Call on the Secretary-General and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual violence in Conflict to formally launch the implementation plan for the signed joint communiqué dated December 2014 on prevention of sexual violence.
- e) Remain committed to the protection of civic space and freedom of expression.
- f) Ensure any involvement of Sudan and Uganda in South Sudan's internal security is under the auspices of the UN.
- g) Call for UNMISS to prioritize issues related to accountability in all support to the military and security forces, including in reform efforts.
- h) Call for support from the international community in facilitating the reconciliation process among the political elites in South Sudan.

Finally, we urge the Security Council to continue engaging with civil society in country-specific briefings among those essential are Syria, Burundi, Yemen, Uganda and Democratic Republic of Congo generally, as well as in its future discussions on South Sudan. Thank you all.