



CENTRE FOR INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE, PEACE AND JUSTICE - (CIGPJ)

Statement to the UN Security Council by Jackline Nasiwa, National Director, Center for Inclusive Governance, Peace and Justice

Tuesday 8 May 2018

Madam President, Your Excellencies,

Allow me on behalf of the Centre for Inclusive Governance, Peace and Justice (CIGPJ) to sincerely express my appreciation to Poland for inviting me to brief the UN Security Council. I am honored to speak to you today on the situation in South Sudan as a civil society leader and on behalf of the suffering South Sudanese people who have never known peace.

The 2011 referendum brought new hope of liberty, prosperity and unity to the people of South Sudan, but these hopes were shattered by fighting amongst the political leadership of the country from 2013 to-date. Us women, we witness and experience gross violations of human rights and humanitarian law; death, mass displacement, sexual abuse and rape.

Though resilient, we are frustrated as our leaders fail to deliver a lasting political settlement to the crisis. We have watched our young children recruited to fight a senseless war, and our homes and communities become unsafe due to increased insecurity, continued fighting by the warring parties, increased rebellions by estranged groups; militias; 'unknown gunmen'; inter-ethnic and communal cattle fighting.

We are further worried about the future, as the transitional period comes to an end amidst continued fighting. We urge all parties and the government to commit to the High Level Revitalization Forum (HLRF) process as a priority and prerequisite for peaceful transition and inclusive, free and fair elections.

We applaud the efforts by the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), UN Security Council, United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), faith based and civil society in working to secure peace and stability in South Sudan.

However, take note of the following:

Although revitalization of the Peace Agreement is a premise for a stable, prosperous and peaceful South Sudan, the continued violations of its provisions undermine any stabilization efforts within South Sudan. The IGAD High Level Revitalization Forum, which has been inclusive to date, is an opportunity for the parties and other estranged groups to make compromises for the sake of peace. My organization recommends an enforcement mechanism, monitoring, reporting and strict adherence to declared cessation of hostilities. We call upon IGAD, the African Union and UN Security Council to expedite the establishment of transitional justice institutions. Chapter 5 of the Agreement on transitional justice, with a special focus on sexual violence against women, must be preserved. A gender sensitive approach to the monitoring and reporting of ceasefire violations is also essential. As is the need to reform



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governance, justice and security institutions and for a comprehensive Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration and Rehabilitation program.

The competing geopolitical and regional interests within IGAD countries and the unlimited mandate of IGAD further erodes the prospects for peace. I call on the UN Security Council to remain united and put more resources and time to ensuring an inclusive IGAD process, supported by the African Union, reaches final settlement without further delay. The Council should provide support to women leaders and CSOs during the transitional period through funding and capacity building for a gendered and inclusive political process.

The UNMISS peacekeeping mission remains critical and relevant to South Sudan especially on Protection of Civilian camps (POCs), Internally Displaced persons (IDPs) and other conflict areas, as military and paramilitary groups and individuals continue to target women at water points, firewood collections and food gatherings. Women and children are frequently raped, sexually abused, tortured and killed. Victims suffer stigma, trauma, mental disorders, unwanted pregnancies and rejection by husbands and diseases including HIV/AIDS. UNMISS should consult and work with civil society organizations, women and community leaders on conflict sensitivity and early warnings to develop and adopt a gender sensitive approach to civilian protection. I further call for speedy recruitment and full deployment of the Regional Protection Force (RPF) through the African Union to Juba and other areas. It should be noted that Juba as the capital has witnessed relative peace and calm due to the presence and patrol by the Regional Protection Force. With the presence of UNMISS in Yei, civilians have begun to return, and the Lutaya market and shops have re-opened.

We are disturbed by allegations of sexual harassment and abuse by UNMISS Peacekeepers in Wau and in other sites. However, we welcome the strong stance by the UN Secretary-General on his zero tolerance policy towards sexual abuse and call upon UNMISS to expedite the investigations of its peacekeepers and make the reports public. We call for a UN policy and action plan on mainstreaming orientation and enforcing training on sexual harassment of all peacekeepers and UN Police, as critical for disciplined peacekeeping missions.

Civil society is not an enemy. Civil society organizations play an important role in monitoring and in bridging the gap between the government and citizens, through delivery of humanitarian assistance, peacebuilding, protection of human rights and promoting good governance. However, civil society representatives are often arrested, threatened, intimidated and killed due to their work. The closing space for civil society operations has forced some leaders to leave the country. For example, a CSO is required to get permission by all sides to the conflict, before carrying out its activities. The Security Council needs to express support for the important role civil society plays by speaking out against these actions.

I once more thank you and commend the Council for accepting to hear from me on the current situation in my Country and the unbearable suffering of my fellow citizens. I believe that this Council meeting will bring peace to South Sudan and our suffering will come to an end.

I conclude by saying 'AnaTaban', The People Are Tired, Peace now!