

Text Speech of H.E. Gen. Salva Kiir Mayardit the First Vice President of the Sudan and President, Government of Southern Sudan on the First Session of the Opening of the Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly

JUBA, 28TH, MAY 2008

Opening Remarks:

Speaker of the House, Hon. James Wani Igga,

Honorable Members

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Hon. Speaker, before I continue, please allow me to salute our fallen heroes and heroines whose selfless sacrifices have made us to enjoy today the relative peace and tranquility in Southern Sudan and other parts of Sudan. On the top of this golden list of our fallen heroes and heroines is our founding leader, John Garang de Mabior. A few days ago, we just lost members of this Assembly: Hon. Dominic Dim Deng and Hon. Justin Yaac Arop who died with their wives and other comrades in the plane crash as they were returning to Juba after conducting the SPLM functions in Warrap state!

May we all stand for a minute of silence in their memory!

Hon. Speaker and Members:

I am delighted to have this opportunity today to address your August House and share with you the political developments and challenges facing us in building the New Sudan. We are all aware that the opening of this Session was delayed to allow you to participate in the conduct of the 5th Population Census in our country. I hope every one of you did take an effective role in this national exercise.

The conduct of the population census was a challenge to us in the Government of Southern Sudan given the state of our preparedness. We have raised our concerns on return of IDPs, insecurity, early rains and omission of questions related to ethnicity and religion in the census form. Although we have managed in the Presidency to defer the conduct of the census by one week, the actual conduct of the census faced many problems including heavy rains, incidents of insecurity in some parts of Southern Sudan and inadequate forms in some areas. Despite the fact that the official report from the Southern Sudan Centre for Census, Statistics and Evaluation suggests that the census coverage in the Southern Sudan was above 90%, the results of this Census may not fully reflect the real picture of the population of Sudan in general and Southern Sudan in particular.

Hon. Speaker and Honorable Members:

Another important event during your prolonged recess was the SPLM Second National Convention, which came 14 years after its first and historic Chukudum Convention held in

1994. I wish to congratulate those of you from the SPLM, who were elected to various positions in the party. I am delighted to inform honorable members of the Assembly that the SPLM as a leading political party in Southern Sudan has taken the path of democracy as the only way that would ensure stability and progress in the Sudan. Given its history, the SPLM is on a higher moral ground to champion democratic transformation process and set example for the true exercise of democracy in this country.

We know that the road to democracy is a bumpy one, but we are determined to follow it for the benefit of our people. How many leaders in other political parties would dare to step down from leadership of their Parties to subject such positions to a democratic process? If we as leaders do not set example for democracy to take its course, we are destined to lose these leadership positions in disgraceful manner. Contemporary political history in the Sudan and the world at large shows that the leaders who resist the democratic process do end up either in prisons or exile if they manage to escape death. We encourage all other political parties in the Sudan to follow the example set by the SPLM and let us nurture democracy as the basis for democratic transformation.

Hon. Speaker and Members:

On the status of CPA implementation, there has been no much progress except the conduct of the National Population Census that we are still waiting for the final results. Most Presidential Decrees and Directives that were issued in December 2007 after the SPLM recalled its ministers in GoNU in October 2007 were not implemented. Almost two-thirds of all decrees and directives have not been implemented and with one third of decrees and

directives have neither been implemented nor partially implemented. However, this poor implementation of these decrees and directives is more related to unrealistic timing of their execution than lack of political will and commitment.

As you resume your legislative duties today, we are deeply concerned with the plight of our people in Abyei area. On May 14th, the Brigade 31 of Sudan Armed Forces (SAF), which is illegally deployed to Abyei town as per the provisions of the Abyei Protocol (CPA), caused massive displacement of tens of thousands of innocent civilians in Abyei town and looted their properties. Those displaced are mostly those who have just returned back from northern Sudan and were in the process of resettlement to their ancestral places, now that SAF has displaced them once again.

Mr. Speaker, the current crisis in Abyei area is not only a violation of the CPA and basic rights of citizens, but it is a crime against humanity. Abyei town that used to exist is no more there as it was burnt to ground by SAF forces. It is simply a humanitarian crisis caused by national army that was supposed to protect the lives and properties of the citizens. Although the UN agencies and NGOs are responding well, the Government of Southern Sudan is committed to avail the necessary resources to address the appalling humanitarian situation in the area.

On the political side, we as Government of Southern Sudan will implement the resolutions of the SPLM Second Convention on Abyei crisis, including condemnation of atrocities committed in the area, bringing the command of SAF Brigade 31 to the books, immediate

redeployment of SAF Brigade 31 beyond the northern boundaries as per ABC report, full implementation of Abyei Protocol, cessation of hostilities, and calling on international community to respond to this humanitarian crisis; calling on SAF/NCP to allow free movement of UN monitors in the area.

As the JIUs in Abyei Area are established on the basis of the provisions of the CPA, the JIUs are the sole legal army that can provide protection to the civil population and Oil-fields in the area. The restriction imposed on the movement of the UNMIS monitors in Abyei area by the SAF/NCP is a clear violation of the provisions of Abyei Protocol

As the Convention reiterated its commitment to peace and called upon me as Chairperson of the SPLM and President Bashir to resort to amicable and peaceful resolution of the current crisis in Abyei area, I have initiated discussion with President Bashir and we agreed on immediate withdrawal of SAF forces from Abyei area, ceasefire and cessation of hostilities. I have also delegated Dr. Riek Machar to meet President Bashir on the current crisis in Abyei area. Since then, the SAF have been building up its forces in Abyei area, particularly along the roads leading to northern Sudan. As I mentioned in my speech to the National Convention, the SPLM/GoSS are committed to peace but we retain the right of protecting our people and their properties.

Mr. Speaker, the current crisis in Abyei area lies in the non implementation of the Abyei Protocol, which the National Congress Party has deliberately reneged from it. All the Sudanese people, our friends in IGAD countries and the international Community at large

are fully aware of the efforts the SPLM has exerted for the full implementation of Abyei Protocol. Unfortunately, the NCP has shown neither interest nor political will to our quest to implement Abyei Protocol.

Even with this wanton attack on the civil population, I again call upon President Bashir, the Commander in Chief of the SAF, to order the SAF Brigade 31 in Abyei area to immediately pull out so that the JIUs are deployed to restore peace and security in the area. The loss of lives and properties is just inconceivable, as the SAF set the entire town of Abyei ablaze, looted the shops and houses of their victims.

Mr. Speaker, Honorable Members:

Our experience with the population census suggests that we need to be more proactively prepared on the remaining forthcoming national events, particularly the general elections in 2009, popular consultation for people of Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile in 2009 and referendum for people of Southern Sudan and Abyei Area in 2011. Our preparation for the general elections must start with immediate effect. On the electoral bill, the SPLM was ahead in preparing its draft legislation for general elections after wide consultations within the party and other political parties and civil society. This draft became the basis for the current national election bill that is now before the Presidency.

Hon. Speaker, we have not reached consensus on some key issues in the proposed legislation, particularly on the percentage for proportional representation and the

Electoral College. Besides legislation, we have finished with assistance from UN the assessment of election infrastructure in Southern Sudan and the required resources for the general election and referendum. The initial findings of the assessment report show that we have no time left to conduct the general elections by 2009 as per the provisions of the CPA. On our preparation for referendum, we are expected to finalize the Referendum Act by July 2009. Again the time is so short and we need to act now. In preparation for the referendum, we have commissioned a credible legal firm to prepare draft legislation for referendum for people of Southern Sudan and Abyei area. This draft is now ready and it will be subjected to wider consultation with all political parties and civil society before it is presented to National Constitution Review Commission.

Hon. Speaker, Members of the House:

During your recess, the city of Omdurman came under attack that resulted in loss of innocent lives, human suffering and fear among civilian population and above all it threatened the institutions of government in our capital city Khartoum. Whoever was behind this barbaric attack on Khartoum, we condemned it as such acts would yield no results but will only deepen and aggravate grievances and hatred. Hon. Speaker we also condemned this attack because it targeted the institutions that were established as per the provisions of the CPA and our National Constitution. Despite our condemnation of this attack on Omdurman, we urged the law enforcement agencies to respect the basic rights of citizens and rule of law and not to use this incident to victimize innocent civilians.

Hon. Speaker, this incident is a wake-up-call and confirms our call for finding amicable solutions to the conflict in Darfur. The SPLM has been on the record in its search for long lasting solution to the Darfur problem. As we have now managed to reunite most of the Darfurian movements that did not sign Darfur Peace Agreement, we urge all parties to conflict in Darfur to resume immediately, the long stalled dialogue between the GoNU/NCP and non signatories to Abuja Peace Agreement, so that we can put an end to the current human suffering in Darfur. The current attacks and the aerial bombardment of the innocent civilians in Darfur are not acceptable as they only aggravate suffering of the innocent civilians.

Hon. Speaker and Members of the House:

As you may be aware, I was scheduled to travel to Oslo Norway to attend the Third Sudan Consortium, but I was unable to attend the occasion because of the plane tragedy that claimed the lives of our comrades, earlier mentioned above, however; the Vice President of the Republic Ustaz Ali Osman Taha led our delegation to the Third Sudan Consortium.

I am glad to inform this august House that the Third Sudan Consortium was successful in terms of meeting its two key objectives: Firstly review of the progress in the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and Joint Assessment Mission commitments to date (2005-2007), Secondly it agreed on the recovery and development priorities for the second half of the CPA period (2008-2011).

The 45 countries and international agencies that attended the Consortium reaffirmed their commitment to full implementation of the CPA while raising deep concerns about the deteriorating security situation in Darfur. The GoSS delegation team to the Consortium managed to articulate well our priorities in key sectors of security reform (DDR, demining, rule of law, local government), primary education, primary health, water and livelihoods.

Hon. Speaker, I would like to seize this opportunity to extend my gratitude and appreciation to international community, particularly the people and government of Norway, for their renewed commitment and pledges for the second phase of the CPA implementation. We have learnt a lot from the past three years in managing international assistance and we need to do it differently this time so that our people can benefit from such assistance. The Government of Southern Sudan is to provide leadership and ensure the ownership in the management of the international assistance through the mechanisms that we have agreed upon. Besides the priorities identified by the GoSS; the issue of women empowerment will be central in the new projects to be funded during the second phase. We need to reciprocate the efforts of the international community and the donor countries by strengthening our institutions in how to manage such assistance. It is crucial that this must be given the attention it deserves.

Hon. Speaker and Members of the House:

There is a great challenge on both Government of Southern Sudan and Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly; the legislative priorities are not processed timely. Hon. Speaker, we

simply do not have necessary laws for effective functioning of our judicial systems. Things are very slow. There are laws earnestly required to curb some of the ills in our system especially the issue of corruption and crimes, which need to be clearly defined and articulated. I have observed this apathy with great concern and came to terms with it that the underlying problem on this is just a lack of capacity. If it is true that we lack capacity, we may be obliged to creatively explore other options to expedite the legislation process. Let us just identify the problem and work towards its solution. During your recess, we have passed four provisional orders that will be presented to you by our Minister of Legal Affairs and Constitutional Development.

Mr. Speaker and the House

Food Security is a major concern to all of us. As the whole world is on a full gear of alert about the looming food shortages in most parts of the world and particularly Africa, in Southern Sudan, we are not doing anything about this anticipated greater famine, but instead, have chosen to depend on the food that is produced across the borders.

For instance if Uganda and Kenya close their borders today for any given reason; here in Juba we will starve to death the following day. This is a serious matter that needs full attention by each and every one of us in this Honorable House and beyond across the board. All the food items that we see in our markets are not produced by our famers. Our people have abandoned agriculture in its entity. This is a very serious issue, the Ministry of Agriculture must address comprehensively. Our people have departed from our culture of self- reliance and adopted a culture of dependency. Why should we have to buy tomatoes and vegetables that we can produce in plenty here in Southern Sudan? With the rainy season now on, our people in the rural areas and those loitering in the cities of Southern Sudan must be encouraged to farming. The Ministry of Agriculture must take note on this and put it into practice now and on.

Hon. Speaker and the House:

I would like to conclude my speech by reminding ourselves that the Abyei issue remains central in the full implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. And as an assurance to the people of Abyei I would like to say the following: the Government of Southern Sudan and its people stand in full support of all the provisions of the Abyei Protocol and the Abyei Boundary Commission Report. As the Chairman of the SPLM, the party that appended its signature on the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the head of the Government of Southern Sudan, Abyei Protocol will neither be renegotiated nor compromised, but it must only be implemented.

As also a remainder to ourselves, we will resist all the attempts by other side to push us into war, but we have to work with all the peace loving people in Sudan and the world at large for the betterment of our people and country through the full implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

We must not allow ourselves to be dragged into a war, which is on the agenda of other people. As I have always said, when attacked we must respond on the basis of self defense only.

Lastly but not least are the two major coming events namely: the General Elections (2009) and the Referendum for the Self-Determination for the people of Southern Sudan, and Abyei (2011). The Popular Consultation for the people of Nuba Mountains and Southern Blue Nile (2009), this has to remain our home work from now until that day comes. As Legislatures, it is your duty to enlighten your constituencies accordingly and emphasize on the unity of the people of Southern Sudan.

With this remarks, I pronounce your Honorable House opened for its first session, 2008.

Wishing you a very productive Legislative Session

Thank you, God Bless you all!