
Speech of H.E. Gen. Salva Kiir Mayardit
1st Vice President of the Republic,
President Government of Southern Sudan
On the 3rd Anniversary of the Martyrs Day

Juba 30th, July 2008

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Let us stand for a minute of silence in memory of our fallen heroes and heroines:

Comrade Dr. Riek Machar Teny, Vice President Government of Southern Sudan

Comrade James Wani Igga, Speaker, Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly

Comrade Clement Wani Konga, Governor, Central Equatoria State

The Advisors, Ministers, Heads of Commissions, Members of Parliaments in the Government of National Unity, GOSS and States.

Members of the Diplomatic Corps and Representatives from friendly countries

Representatives of the United Nations and other International Organizations

Religious Leaders

Invited guests:

Ladies and Gentlemen:

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I dearly welcome all of you to this occasion, to commemorate the 3rd Anniversary of our fallen heroes and heroines (Martyrs) who ultimately paid the price for our freedom during the last 22 years of our struggle for justice, dignity and equality.

On top of this golden list is the Martyr of all Martyrs; our late leader, the icon of peace, the freedom fighter and founder of our heroic Movement, the SPLM, and Commander in Chief of the gallant SPLA forces, Dr. John Garang de Mabior, who on this day, 30th July, 2005 untimely departed us in a plane crash as he was returning to his beloved homeland after a visit to our sisterly neighboring country Uganda.

Dr. John, as we all know devoted all his time and eventually his life to the just cause of the marginalized, neglected and disadvantaged people of Sudan. In 1983 he and other comrades, most of who paid the ultimate price for our freedom, founded the SPLM/SPLA to fight for the rights of his people and to fight against the injustices perpetuated by the successive minority ruling cliques against the Sudanese people.

The successive rulers of Sudan who took over power from the colonialists lacked an agenda for the Sudan, but instead subjected the Sudanese people to neo-colonialism, where religion or creed and color became a national identification card (ID) creating imaginary classes in the Sudanese society as opposed to God's will creator of all men and women.

The SPLM/SPLA led by Dr. John Garang was fighting against this state of affairs, where our country was held hostage since its independence, serving no one but the interests of a few. The SPLM/SPLA fought for the creation of the New Sudan of equality and justice for all Sudanese people, where religion, creed and color of the skin would have no role to play in our political, social and economic affairs. The SPLM/SPLA fought to establish a New Sudan where all the Sudanese peoples would be equal before the law, a New Sudan is the Sudan of equal opportunities for all regardless of their geographical locations or ethnic backgrounds.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

The vision of the New Sudan that Dr. John preached and fought for 22 years is no longer a speculation or a perception; it has now become a reality. You can see it and you can touch it. In May this year (2008), the SPLM held its Second National Convention here in Juba, following the historic Chukudum Convention of 1994. I wish to attest to you that the face of the New Sudan was visible and evident during the one week of our deliberations and consultations. The Second SPLM Convention has formally affirmed Dr. John's vision of the New Sudan. It has also confirmed that the establishment of the New Sudan could be attainable sooner than it was anticipated.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

4

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As we commemorate this day, we must also be mindful of the legacy of our Martyrs. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), which constitutes a legacy for each and every single SPLA combatant who died, got wounded or became disabled as a result of the war, not forgetting those widowed or orphaned in the course of our long struggle, is an enduring commitment to honour them.

Yes, Ladies and Gentlemen, we have played our part in our small corner. On this day we cannot forget the heroes and heroines who have played major roles in different parts of this globe. I am honored and indeed the whole of Southern Sudan is honored by the presence of some key personalities who have played and continue to play leading roles in making this world a better place for all of us. We welcome them during this memorable event of our history.

They have decided to share with us this important occasion in recognition of what our people have contributed during their struggle in making Sudan a peaceful, safe and a place better for all its citizens. These Great Women are:

- 1. Jody Williams, a Nobel Laureate Prize Winner in 1997 in recognition of her efforts in elimination of Land Mines.**
- 2. Prof. Maathai Wangari, a Nobel Laureate Prize Winner in 2007, in recognition of her efforts in protecting the environment through the Green Belt Movement.**

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3. **Gloria White-Hammond** who is heading an organization called “**My Sister’s Keeper**” that is working to support vulnerable women in all parts of the world including Southern Sudan.
 4. **Mia Farrow**, an outstanding actress in Hollywood and has decided to dedicate her efforts to support the programmes of UNICEF, UNHCR and NGOs aimed at improving the lives of women and children.

In order to honor our heroes and heroines at home and abroad we must, uphold and defend their legacy. We must protect their achievements brought about by the CPA so that those who died should not have died in vain and the wounded; disabled, widowed and orphaned should not have suffered or endured their pain vain. The CPA provides a reason for them to remain hopeful and proud for being part of the history that they wrote with their own blood. As Dr. John used to say: Sudan will never be the same again, thanks to the CPA.

It goes without saying that it takes a few people to change the whole world. Nevertheless, in the case of Sudan, it took late Dr. John and those who died in the struggle to bring about the change through the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

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It is fair to say your Government of Southern Sudan is doing all that it could to change the lives of our people. We are in the third year of the CPA. Slowly but surely, the Government of Southern Sudan has taken tremendous steps in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. We have adopted and implemented the policy of universal education that resulted in most of our children enrolled in primary schools. The work on the roads within and outside Juba is going on as planned. Health Services have significantly improved. Renovation on referral hospitals including Juba Teaching Hospital is almost complete.

The Ministry of Labor, Public Service and Human Resource Development has launched a payroll scrutiny program, which has resulted in the successful identification and elimination of ghost names from GoSS payrolls and those of some other Southern states. The Ministry has managed to recover in one month about half a million Sudanese Pounds from the ghost names and double-pay and we expect more to be recovered. In Jongeli State alone, the Governor has managed to reduce the civil service by more than 50% and we hope other states will follow suit.

As I commend the work of the Ministry of Labour, I want to send this clear message to those who are still receiving more than one salary from the government that we will get you very soon and be prepared to face justice. I urge all levels of government and institutions in Southern Sudan to take this issue of payroll and the ghost names seriously. I assure you failure to do so will

7

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have profound consequences on the violators. In this way we can effectively combat corruption in our systems.

As we struggle to reform public service and have a lean government, the GOSS is committed to invest more in the development of private sector as cornerstone for jobs creation, sustainable delivery of services and efficient use of our natural resources.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

In recognition of the role played by our martyrs, war affected citizens and war veterans, we have established Southern Sudan War Disabled, Widows and Orphans Commission and Southern Sudan Veterans Association, responsible for the affairs of these war affected citizens.

I am delighted that the Commission and the Association are in the process of establishing an information system that will help to assist the families of our martyrs and veterans. In particular the Commission has managed to provide seed capital to more than 720 families and facilitated the rehabilitation of a large number of our war disabled. The GOSS is committed to avail more resources to these institutions for the social and economic welfare of the families of our martyrs and the disabled. My Office will be working closely with these two institutions to ensure these objectives are achieved.

8

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Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, there is now relative peace throughout Southern Sudan, except for the sporadic breach of security which occurs from time to time, particularly the cattle rustling among the pastoralists. Cattle rustling has been made worse than has been traditionally the case largely because of availability of firearms in the hands of civilians. But it is just a matter of time, we shall come to the closure of this chapter. Directives have been issued to all governors and our security forces to collect illegal firearms from the ordinary citizens throughout Southern Sudan.

The Ugandan/LRA Peace Talks:

On the issue of the Uganda/LRA Peace talks or Juba Peace Talks as commonly known, the Uganda Final Peace Agreement was supposed to have been signed on April 15, 2008 here in Juba. We did all we could. The Ugandan President, Gen. Yoweri Museveni was himself here on that day. Unfortunately and to our dismay, the proposed peace settlement could not be signed. Joseph Kony, the LRA leader who was expected to sign his part at Garamba on April 10, 2008, did not show up for the occasion.

Although we will keep our doors open for the peaceful resolution of conflict in Northern Uganda, we will keep other options so that our people are protected and secured.

In conclusion:

As we remember our martyrs, we must also remember our commitment to change Sudan, maintain peace and improve the lives of our people. We can only do this through organizing and mobilizing our people and preparing them to participate in the forthcoming National Elections. I am glad to inform you that the National Electoral Act has been signed into law on July 14, 2008 by the President of the Republic. The forthcoming elections provide a golden opportunity of realization of true change, the primary objective that we have been fighting for.

Finally, I restate our tribute to the fallen sons and daughters of our country to whom this day has been dedicated. Together, we

pledge our commitment to honor their heroism by building this land for posterity.

Long live the memory of our Martyrs,

Long Live the Unity of our people

Thank you and God be with you all!

Speech of H.E. Gen. Salva Kiir Mayardit, President Government of Southern Sudan, On the 3rd Anniversary of the Martyrs Day,

11

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