



REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN The President

His Excellency Salva Kiir Mayardit
President of the Republic of South Sudan
Remarks on the Occasion of South Sudan 12th Anniversary

Delivered at Government Secretariat

08/07/2023

Fellow Citizens,

Let me begin my speech by congratulating you, my people, on the occasion of our country's 12th anniversary of independence. Also, allow me this opportunity to sincerely greet you on this very important occasion in the name of our country, the Republic of South Sudan.

The theme of my address this year is: *"consolidating peace and stability to pave the way for transparent, fair and credible elections"*. The key words in this year's address are **'peace and stability'**. We need stability in order to allow our people to voluntarily return home from refugee and IDP Camps, to allow our people reconcile and for the government to be able to hold credible elections.

Achieving peace and stability is the only way that will allow us to exit from the cycle of transitional governments and violence once and for all. To this effect, I am calling upon you, my fellow citizens to work with the peace partners and my colleagues in government collectively for peace and stability in our country.

Fellow Citizens,

Since 2018, we have encountered and continue to encounter challenges in the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. Fortunately for us, none of these challenges affected our intention to implement the Agreement. Each time we faced hurdles, we have managed to resolve them peacefully through dialogue.

Let us continue with this spirit in the coming months as we work to accelerate the implementation of the remaining critical provisions of the agreement. Here, fellow citizens, I want to sincerely thank our peace partners for remaining focused on the implementation of the Revitalized Peace Agreement through the roadmap.

Fellow Citizens,

I would like to thank you for enduring the challenges resulting from the senseless war we fought amongst ourselves from 2013 to 2018. The impact of this war is still with us. For instance, the war has delayed our governance reforms and induced economic difficulties. Thousands of our people are still in the refugee camps in neighbouring countries, even though thousands have voluntarily returned to the country. Inside the country, we have internally displaced persons in various parts of our country who still fear the possibility of war erupting in our country again.

Fellow Citizens,

In the area of governance, our desire to build strong governance structures in our institutions have been delayed by the internal conflict. Yet these are the structures that would enable the government to cater for basic services for our citizens and initiate development in our country. Nevertheless, we are working very hard to advance positive reforms in different sectors of our administration to improve the delivery of service to our people.

With the current implementation of the roadmap, we aim to end this state of suffering by availing resources to support the implementation of the key provisions in the roadmap. In 2022-2023, we allocated 15 billion South Sudanese pounds to peace implementation. This year, however, we have increased the allocation of funds to support peace implementation from 15 billion SSP to 50 billion SSP in the 2023-2024 budget.

Fellow Citizens,

On economic difficulties, your government is aware of the negative impact of high prices in the market due to the weakening of our pound. To address this, the cabinet resolved to increase salaries for civil servants by 400%. This proposed increment is included in the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 which is now in parliament for further study and final approval. The Cabinet believes this modest

increment will help to relieve some hardships on the cost of living for civil servants, while we continue to improve on our resource envelop before further increment can be made.

Your government is also exploring sourcing food supplies from the region that would be sold at subsidized prices through national companies with requisite experience in management and distribution of such items. These two measures will serve as mitigating factors on the current economic difficulties as we work to find a permanent solution.

Externally, the conflict in the Sudan has led to a massive influx of our citizens and Sudanese refugees into the country. This inflow is exerting immense economic and social pressure on our border communities. While we are coping with this unexpected situation, I am calling upon the international community to relieve this pressure by availing resources to respond to this severe humanitarian situation. With rainy season, it is now almost logistically impossible to move these returnees from transit sites to other locations. This is why it is imperative for our international partners to take this appeal seriously.

On our part as the Government of South Sudan, we will continue to work with regional and international bodies on finding a peaceful solution to the Sudanese conflict. To our brothers in the Non-Signatories Opposition Group, I would like to reiterate that the Government is committed to the Rome Talks.

Fellow Citizens,

We have reached a critical phase in our determination to consolidate peace in our country. As I have always said, there is no return to war again under my watch. In the coming months, my attention and that of our partners will be focused on how to give you, the citizens the power to choose your leaders democratically by December, 2024.

The High-Level Standing Committee, which comprises of all the parties is overseeing the timely implementation of the provisions of the roadmap that will pave the way for elections. Through the efforts of the High-Level Standing Committee with Cabinet and Parliamentary support, the Constitutional Review Bill has been finalized. The same applies to the Political Parties Act. The National Elections Act is in the legislative process and it will be finalized soon. These three laws are key conditions for the conduct of transparent, fair and credible elections.

Another pre-condition for successful elections is the implementation of transitional security arrangements. The leadership of security sector and the Joint Defence Board are ironing out differences on the mid-level command structure in the organized forces. Much work has been done in this area with agreement reached in the command structure of Prison Service and Civil Defense Force. What remains to be resolved is mid-level command structures for other organized forces, and as soon as this is done, the deployment of the already trained Unified Forces will follow immediately.

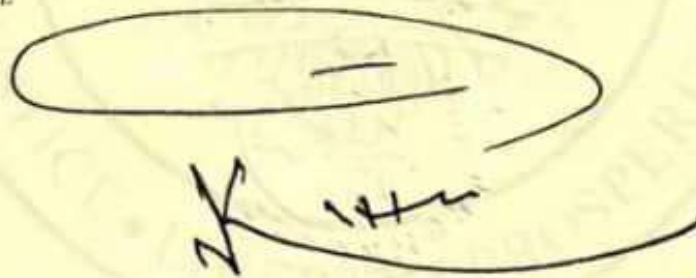
Preparations for the training of the second batch of the Unified Forces are ongoing. The National Transitional Committee (NTC), which is the body responsible for this exercise is working on procuring food items and other necessary supplies. As soon as those items are secured, the training of the next batch will begin.

In closing, I urge you, my fellow citizens to embrace the spirit of peace, reconciliation and national unity as we work to implement the Agreement to end this transitional period with elections in 2024. Given that this holiday has fallen on a Sunday, I wish to inform all our citizens and international organizations that Monday July 10th, 2023 will be a public holiday. Please take your time to enjoy Monday with your families.

Once again, I congratulate you on the occasion of our 12th Anniversary of independence and wish you all the best as you peacefully celebrate this important holiday. May the Almighty God bless you and our country the Republic of South Sudan.

Long live South Sudan.

Thank you all.

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, enclosed within a hand-drawn oval. The signature is highly cursive and appears to be the name 'Salva Kiir Mayardit'.

Salva Kiir Mayardit
President,
Republic of South Sudan
Juba, South Sudan