



## **RELIEF ORGANIZATION FOR SOUTH SUDAN (ROSS)**

*National Headquarters – Pagak, South Sudan*

Ref: ROSS/Pagak/06/07

'Saving Lives'

19<sup>th</sup> June, 2015

### **PRESS STATEMENT**

The ROSS held a Humanitarian Conference in Nairobi on 19 and 20 June to discuss the ongoing humanitarian crises in South Sudan and how best to continue reaching affected civilians with life-saving aid.

The conference deliberated on issues facing humanitarian actors in their efforts to assist the most vulnerable people in South Sudan. In this respect, the conference concluded that all efforts must be made to ensure free and unhindered access humanitarian actors to the affected populations. The conference also highlighted the need for humanitarian action to remain independent, neutral and impartial. In this regard and with immediate effect, ROSS leadership has endorsed the following decision(s):

- To ensure the commitments of ROSS to Article 4 of the Cessation of Hostilities which calls for the facilitation of humanitarian assistance, humanitarian organizations should inform ROSS of their existence, mandate and operations in SPLM/A-IO territory;
- ROSS is aware and appreciative of the goodwill of the international community and the donor community as demonstrated by their continued commitment to support the humanitarian response. ROSS remains committed to work with humanitarian actors to mitigate risks and concerns of misappropriation or diversion of humanitarian assistance;
- ROSS is fully aware of the limitations faced by humanitarian agencies operating in South Sudan and in IO areas and in particular the difficulty to access the suffering people in these hard-to-reach areas;
- ROSS aims to facilitate **free and open interaction** to allow for lessons learned, sharing of information, solving emerging humanitarian challenges (safety and security of humanitarian workers, assets and supplies) and relevant issues between humanitarian agencies operating in SPLM/A-IO and ROSS;

- Humanitarian organizations operating in the SPLM/A-IO territory **shall not be subjected to taxes, fees or travel permits** for humanitarian staff members or any other levies by ROSS or any other local authority;
- Recognizing the fluid security situation and the continued commitment of ROSS to safeguard humanitarian action, the **travel or movements of humanitarian personnel in locations should be shared with ROSS. The information sharing mechanism will be established in a manner that does not hinder humanitarian operations;**
- ROSS remains committed to ensuring that the needed humanitarian space is present for all humanitarian actors in SPLM/A-IO territory;
- ROSS may decide to seek material, technical or financial support from humanitarian agencies if the support will contribute to humanitarian work but these **agencies are not obligated to provide support** if there is mutual acceptance without coercion i.e. use of humanitarian compounds or other materials;
- Civilians, regardless of their ethnicity, race or nationality, have the right to receive humanitarian assistance. Humanitarian actors have the right to access populations in need, provided their interventions remain within the defined humanitarian principals;
- Humanitarian actors are obligated to provide humanitarian assistance in a manner that preserves the dignity, respect of culture and respect of the local population;
- ROSS promotes equal employment opportunities for all South Sudanese in all organizations – **avoid gender or other forms of discrimination during recruitment.** Standards and qualifications of an employee need to be considered. The organizations are advised to ensure that their employees are not engaged in conflict activities that may put them in conflict with the authority.



**Hon. Gatwech Peter Kulang**

Executive Director

Relief Organization for South Sudan (ROSS), Pagak, South Sudan

*CC: Hon. Hussein Mar Nyuot, Chairperson of National Committee for Humanitarian Affairs*