



# Republic of South Sudan

*The President*

## **Presidential Address to the Nation on COVID-19 Pandemic Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> April 2020.**

- Your Excellency the First Vice President,
- Ministers Present,
- Members of the Press,
- Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today is a good day and time to address you, my people, as you welcome Good Friday to start celebrating the Easter Holiday from tomorrow the 10<sup>th</sup> April through Monday the 13<sup>th</sup> of April 2020; marking the resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

I had thought that this Easter Holiday, coming shortly after we have established the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity (R-TGoNU), would be a joyful time for all of us as a people and government, having re-united our ranks with our brothers and sisters who were in the Opposition.

Unfortunately, the world has been thrown into total Chaos by the deadly outbreak of the Coronavirus Pandemic. Nearly two million people across the globe have fallen sick, thousands of new cases are being reported on a daily basis and hundreds have lost their precious lives to the disease.

On your behalf and on my own behalf, I humbly pay sincere condolences to the governments, people and the families of the

victims of the Coronavirus Disease worldwide. In particular, I send a 'Get well soon Message' to Prime Minister Boris Johnson of the United Kingdom. We call on the people of America, Italy, France, Japan, China, Spain, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Kenya, Uganda Ethiopia, Iran and our sisterly country, the Republic of the Sudan to continue with what they are doing to contain the disease. Our prayers are with you all.

In our own country, the National Task-Force I formed on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020 following the declaration of the COVID-19 Pandemic meets on a daily basis. Every day as you all know, it updates itself on the global, Continental and Regional developments of COVID-19. The Taskforce issues a daily bulletin on the situation in the country and reiterates the safety measures.

So far, we have three (3) confirmed cases of COVID-19, all from people who have travelled to Juba and Torit from COVID-19 infested countries. So practically, COVID-19 is in Juba and Torit and we must prevent it from spreading across the Country. A total of 65 contacts have been listed. The Ministry of Health's Rapid Response Teams have collected 50 samples from the contacts of the three cases for testing. They are now tracing more contacts of all the confirmed cases and you will be updated accordingly.

To this day, the Task-force has issued 19 Presidency Communications; covering among other things measures to prevent the spread of the disease in our country.

I know that the preventive measures the Taskforce has put in place will interfere with your daily livelihood. It will restrict large gatherings at funeral places, churches, other social events and, above all, deprive you of the freedom to celebrate and enjoy the Easter festivity. I sincerely sympathize with you in all of that,

but I urge you to respect and strictly follow the directives and advice of the Taskforce.

These measures are intended to protect rather than harm you. Each and every one of us has a duty to protect himself/herself, their families and all their compatriots. Disregarding the importance of social distancing will expose our country to a high risk of transmitting and spreading the disease. I appeal to you to seriously cooperate with us in our struggle to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in our country.

Again, the measures we have put in place will have a serious impact on our fragile economy, as it has done to every country in the world, including the big economies. The Ministry of Finance and Planning has paid two (2) million dollars to the Ministry of Health to implement its Action Plan for the control of COVID-19. It has also paid one (1) million dollars to Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology to cater for the needs of our students who are stranded abroad.

Regardless of our financial challenges as a country, the Ministry of Finance and Planning is under instructions to raise the money needed to cover the budget of the COVID-19 Taskforce to ensure the safety of our country from the Coronavirus Pandemic.

**Finally**, I must warn you that COVID-19 can be brought into South Sudan by anybody including South Sudanese. I, therefore, call upon you to exercise restraint and avoid hate speeches and xenophobic utterances against our guests and those who have come to provide services to us from different countries and organizations.

I appreciate the leadership of the IGAD Countries for their regional approach in combating COVID-19 and I call on all of us in the leadership of the IGAD region to continue as articulated in our joint statement. In this regard, I welcome the outcome of the Virtual Conference of the Ministers of Health of the IGAD countries on Response Strategies for mitigating the risk of COVID-19 Pandemic in the Region that took place on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2020. I, also, applaud the Communique of the 11<sup>th</sup> IGAD Health Ministerial Committee Meeting on Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

**To conclude**, I welcome the action taken by the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Protection of Civilian Sites (POCs) in Bentiu, Wau, Bor and Malakal to voluntarily return home.

**I pray for God's protection of South Sudan from the danger of COVID-19 Pandemic and I wish you, nevertheless, a joyful and happy Easter Holiday.**

**Thank You**

