



Republic of South Sudan
The President

July 8th, 2020

His Excellency, Salva Kiir Mayardit
President of the Republic of South Sudan
Address to the Nation on the Ninth Anniversary of the
Country's Independence

Good evening fellow citizens.

I come before you this evening to wish you a happy ninth anniversary of our country's independence, and to convey my warmest greetings to each and every one of you on this historic day.

Before I go into my message, let me take this opportunity to pay tribute to our martyrs who paid the ultimate price for the anniversary we are celebrating. Tonight, as we reflect on our long journey to statehood, let us all honour our heroes and heroines whose selfless sacrifices made the difference in our quest for liberty.

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Let us remember our late leader, Dr. John Garang de Mabior and other leaders before him who carried the responsibility of the struggle for our freedom on their shoulders. In the same vein, let us also remember all the sons and daughters of South Sudan whose courage during the struggle made it possible for us to gain our freedom.

Fellow compatriots,

With the formation of the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity, we were all expecting to hold a public celebration on this ninth anniversary to connect with you as your leaders. But this did not happen because, like the previous years where the war we are now ending did not allow us to hold public celebration, this year's celebration has been affected by the corona virus pandemic. Since its advent late last year, corona virus has affected millions of people over the world. It has affected economies both in rich and developing countries and it has taken lives, including the lives of our compatriots here in South Sudan.

In the face of this global danger, your government has recognized that these are not normal times and has worked with partners to implement safety measures against the

spread of the virus. While much could be done at institutional level, the sharpest weapon available to us against the spread of corona virus is individual precautions. With this in mind, I am appealing to you tonight to practice social distancing, wear face mask and commit to regular hand washing. To those in urban centres, I urge you to embrace wearing face masks, because they provide critical safeguards against infections in densely populated areas.

To those advocating for total lockdown as one avenue of preventing the spread of corona virus, I would like to assure you tonight that the government has considered all available options before deciding against total lockdown. As a landlocked country that imports the bulk of its needs, the government felt that such a lockdown would impose serious economic hardship on the country and citizenry. The approach we chose balances the fight against the spread of corona virus with the need to void imposing severe restrictions on the public, majority of whom survive on running small daily business activities.

In the midst of our fight against the virus, medical professionals are our first line of defence. Let me pay tribute to them tonight for working tirelessly to save lives in a very difficult situation. I have heard the challenges you are

facing as you tackle this pandemic and work is underway to address your concerns.

Fellow compatriots,

One of the achievements since 2018 is that we have a Permanent Ceasefire that is largely holding. While interrupted by corona virus, work is underway through the Rome Process to further consolidate this ceasefire by securing a final political settlement with the holdout Groups. With this ongoing work, I can confidently say that the phase of political violence is now behind us.

Unfortunately, our success in ending political violence is now threatened by a different sort of violence: inter-communal conflict that is raging in different parts of our country. As the government, we will not allow this new threat to reverse our gains. We shall pursue a multi-layered approach to resolve this problem once and for all.

First, the government in the coming days will initiate inter and intra communal dialogue so that we can address the root causes of this fighting both between and within our communities. Secondly, alongside this process, we shall launch a full-scale disarmament of the civil population, an exercise which is already underway in some parts of the

country. Finally, we shall take measures to strengthen the institutions tasked with the enforcement of law and order as well as those administering justice. These steps will help create an improved environment for safety and security, which will in turn enable us to deliver services and promote development across the country.

I therefore, appeal to our communities, specifically the traditional chiefs to cooperate and implement the directives of disarmament campaign. I hope our citizens who are not authorized to bear arms will heed the call for disarmament and voluntarily surrender their weapons to security forces tasked with this exercise. For those who will not heed this call, the government will be left with no option than to forcibly remove these weapons from their hands. The government hopes this will not be the case and that it shall not be compelled to resort to the use of force on its quest to retake this illegally acquired arms.

Fellow compatriots,

Despite what we have achieved in terms of implementing the Revitalized Peace Agreement, I am acutely aware that the peace implementation remains painfully slow and far below your expectations. We must therefore collectively act

in a decisive fashion to pick up the pace in resolving sticky issues in the implementation of the agreement.

I have said and I am repeating it tonight that my commitment to the cause for peace and stability in our country remains total. In this context, I have strived to do all I can to steer the peace process forward. After the tragic events of 2013 and 2016, I could hardly imagine ever working again with Dr. Riek Machar, the leader of the SPLM/IO, but having decided that we must put the interest of the country and its people above all else, I changed my mind. I told President Museveni and former President Bashir in Entebbe that I was going to swallow my pride and resume working with Dr. Riek Machar. It was this key concession which made it possible to realize the Revitalized Peace Agreement that we signed in Addis Ababa on September 12, 2018. Again, in the interest of peace, I have to relinquish the popular thirty-two (32) states and revert to ten (10) states so as to move the process forward.

I did not make these concessions because of any weakness on the side of the government I lead, I made them in the interest of moving forward the cause of peace in the country. Therefore, it is critical that we go about the business of implementing the provisions of Revitalized

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Peace Agreement in the spirit of give and take. Unless we are willing as stakeholders in this Agreement to reciprocate each other's concessions, we will not achieve the required progress within the time frame left. We cannot afford to stagnate because the clock is already ticking towards the end of the Transitional Period.

More importantly, the Revitalized Agreement did not cater for everything. There are issues it has left for the Parties themselves to sort out through amicable political understandings. To these issues where the agreement is silent on, I would like to emphasize that it is essential we avoid the temptation to foot-drag when tackling them. We ought to forget the idea of seeking to extract concessions from others in return for nothing. Because to engage in such practices would be to squander valuable time.

It is also critical that we, the Parties to the Agreement desist from adopting uncompromising positions in the hope that the mediation will eventually back them. We must move away from such attitudes because the peace we seek to consolidate is our own peace as South Sudanese. It is only us who stand to benefit or lose in its success or failure. Our regional partners and the international community are only there to lend support, but they will never prescribe solutions

to our problems. These we must find ourselves through meaningful and genuine dialogue geared towards finding practical solutions rather than scoring political points or maneuvering for future political advantage.

As we continue on the path of forming the Revitalized Peace Agreement institutions, questions have been raised about our commitment to the inclusion of under-represented groups. Let me emphasize tonight that we are not neglecting our pledge to meet the targets allotted to under-represented groups: women and youth. We value their participation and we shall work to ensure that they are genuinely represented at various levels of the revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity.

Fellow compatriots,

The corona virus pandemic I mentioned earlier has triggered a global economic crisis that among other things has led to a sharp drop in demand for commodities, including oil on which our economy depends. The pandemic has depressed oil prices and we have been unable to compensate for the shortfall in oil revenue with non-oil revenue. Even without oil revenue, we know that non-oil revenues if collected and duly remitted to the National Treasury can enable us to meet basic Government

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expenditure such as wages and operations. Unfortunately, this has not been the case. Very little of what is actually collected by different Government agencies, reaches the National Revenue Authority.

To address this endemic problem, we shall in the coming days be exploring ways and means to speedily rectify this situation such that at the very least, we are able to pay monthly salaries on time.

Looking ahead, the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity and its institutions will be approaching socio-economic development of our country in a balance and coordinated fashion. All the Parties are aware of the centrality of infrastructure to the entire development process. Indeed, the two key pre-requisites to development in any country are peace and infrastructure and I have already discussed my commitment to peace and its implementation as well as the hurdles facing us in that process.

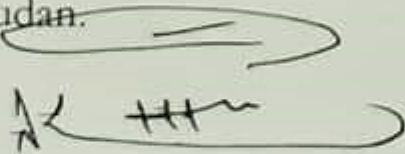
Turning to infrastructure, I am pleased to inform you that the entire Nile Blend oil output has been dedicated exclusively to the funding of infrastructure projects. Construction on segments of the two key highways, namely

National Road 1 and 2 is already underway, thanks to oil revenue from the Nile Blend. We shall retain this arrangement for as long as necessary so that we build roads linking production with consumption centres. This will stimulate and diversify the domestic economy, thus reducing our sole reliance on oil.

Fellow compatriots,

As I end my remarks, I am appealing to you all on this important day in our history to embrace the message of peace individually and collectively. Let us all work tirelessly irrespective of our political leanings to restore trust among ourselves and to mend the social fabric that was torn apart by war we are now putting behind us. Let us all desist from unnecessary propaganda and instead work together as South Sudanese to put our country permanently on the path of peace.

May the almighty God bless all of you and our country
South Sudan.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'S' followed by several vertical strokes and a wavy line, all enclosed within a large, loopy oval shape.

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