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Statement of the Church on the violence in Abyei

We, the leaders of the Catholic and the Episcopal Churches in the Sudan are sad that the region of Abyei is back to war. On behalf of all the Christians, we categorically denounce the recent fighting that took place in Abyei Town, in the midst of thousands of men, women and children, leading again to a mass and panicked exodus. These same civilians have been displaced several times because of belligerence between different clusters of the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) during the war and in the time resettlement has taken place.

It is well known that there have been difficulties resolving the status of Abyei politically but there is no excuse whatsoever for war to break out at the centre of a civil population, no excuse for endangering the lives of innocent people, no excuse for mindless destruction of homes and livelihoods. Failing to care for citizens at this time is indicative of the lack of seriousness taken over the CPA.

As the Church which is the voice of God and moral conscience of the nation, we are very concerned about the violence which has claimed many innocent lives in Abyei and rendered many people homeless at the time when the hope of our people is growing high for the independence and the birth of our God given nation. We urge the leadership which has endorsed the belligerence and issuing a decree that has crippled local governance and impeded humanitarian efforts and the subsequent occupation of Abyei to withdraw the order and decree.

For the sake of the people of God in Abyei, we call for immediate action from the Government of Sudan and the Government of South Sudan to break the deadlock and to initiate negotiations and peace talks once again, with the help of the Regional partners, United Nations and all those Countries who are witnesses to the signature of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA).

We demand that our governments make an immediate concerted effort to agree upon a ceasefire and withdrawal of northern troops from Abyei to allow deployment of a neutral security force, safe passage and speedy resettlement for all the displaced and to work towards a genuine and lasting peace agreement. We also ask the Government of Sudan and the Government of South Sudan to assist in humanitarian efforts and relief for those who have been displaced and cooperate with other organisations who seek to help in this way.

Finally, we ask all those around the world to remember the suffering people of Abyei in their thoughts and prayers at this time.

May the risen Christ who is the Prince of Peace bless us with true Peace.



+Paolino Lukudu Loro
Archbishop of Juba and
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of South Sudan



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