

Province of the Episcopal Church of the Sudan

مجمع الكنيسة الأسقفية السودانية

Email: archbishop@sudan.anglican.org

Office of the Archbishop

P.O. Box 110, Juba, Sudan

Direct Line: (+249) 20445



Dear AFRECS conference participants,

Pentecostal greetings to you in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. This is a time when we reflect on the moment when the Holy Spirit descended on the apostles and the living God gave us all a part of himself. We ask for that same Spirit to give us hearts of compassion and obedience as we strive in the work of the Lord.

Firstly, I would like to sincerely apologise for my absence from the conference. The current situation in Sudan has demanded much of my time and presence in various activities on the ground, which have not allowed me to leave much for other business in different countries. I am also sorry that it has been impossible for any of my bishops to attend what is for us, a very important and influential conference. It is most unfortunate that the conference takes place before the Independence Day celebrations here in the South, otherwise, we would have endeavoured to participate. For some time, we have sensed that insecurity would rise as July 9 grew closer. Therefore, I felt it was important for me, my brother bishops, and other clergy to remain in their respective dioceses to allow for accurate information-sharing within the church, to our partners and to the media, and for efficient coordination of resources in the event that emergency items were required in the dioceses. This year, we have concentrated on peace-building initiatives in areas such as Yirol in Lakes State, Twic East in Jonglei State and Malakal in Upper Nile State which has changed the mentality of many people who were prepared to take up arms and use violence to solve their grievances. The recent outbreak of fighting and subsequent seizure of Abyei by the North has clearly proven our point about increases in violent activities. We hope you can understand our reasons for not being with you at this time. I shall, however, be in the United States as part of another Sudan Council of Churches delegation raising awareness on our situation in October of this year so, God willing, I shall be able to meet with some of you while I am there.

I would like to take this opportunity to appreciate the work that AFRECS has done in being a good advocate for the people of the Sudan. It is with your help and

perseverance that together, we have been able to contribute to the greater effort that resulted in the free, fair and transparent self-determination referendum that took place in January this year. I want to give a heartfelt thanks to the American people for all they have done to assist us spiritually, materially and financially as we struggled towards that historic time in our country's history.

As you must be well aware from reports about insecurity in various parts of the south, particularly Abyei and parts of Lakes State, the work is not over and the challenges are great. Now is a critical time for us to rescue, encourage and enlighten out people. Find below a list of what we see are the current concerns.

1) Disagreements between the governments in Khartoum and Juba

The fact still remains that Khartoum and Juba have been unable to reach a compromise on land settlement and border issues particularly where the issue of Abyei and other oil rich areas located along the border are concerned. The North dispute the 1956 borders which in turn have led to the delay in decisions on citizenship and status of those living along the border, the future citizenship and rights for southerners living in the north, and other issues such as the Four Freedoms, and currency. In the meantime the tensions grow and nothing is resolved.

2) Arming rebel militias within Southern Sudan

There are currently 4 separate groups across different parts of South Sudan poised to bring down the Government of South Sudan (GoSS) and destroy anything and anyone in their path. George Athor and David Yauyau have positioned themselves in northern Jonglei, Gatluak Gai in Unity State, Oliny in Upper Nile and Abdul Bagi Ayii in Northern Bahr-el-Ghazal to achieve their ambitions of domination. The biggest threat in these areas to civilians comes from these heavily-armed militias committed to destroying civilian settlements and killing arbitrarily to further their cause against the Government of South Sudan and for their own political and economic gain. We do not believe it is an accident that southern militias have risen up against GoSS since the referendum in January this year, and just weeks before the formal independence ceremony of the Republic of South Sudan. Somehow, these militias are receiving finances, weapons and other means of support and much of the evidence points to the government in the North who over the years have sponsored militias throughout the war to destabilise the South.

It is well known that the church has often been central to reconciliation efforts between the Sudan People Liberation Army/Government of South Sudan, and rebel militias, with the most prominent of these instances being my mediation between Lt Gen George Athor and the Government of South Sudan. It is essential for the

security of South Sudan that these forces supporting militias, whether internal or external be identified, their support blocked and the perpetrators brought to justice.

3) Outbreak of War between the Sudan Armed Forces and the Sudan People's Liberation Army

Abyei and Southern Kordofan are prime areas for the outbreak of full-scale civil war between North and South Sudan. President Omar Hassan al-Bashir and his ministers in the North have displayed nothing short of belligerence in the recent seizure of Abyei, and the heavy military presence and reports of aggression to civilians within Kadugli town and in other parts of Southern Kordofan during the recent popular consultation process. As mentioned above, we believe that the Northern government is continuing to rearm and facilitate southern rebel militias who then fight their own people and destabilise the whole of South Sudan. As I write this, Abyei is in flames and old and young alike are wandering in the wilderness in search of water and some shelter.

4) Cattle raiding

The illegal theft of cattle and other livestock is a major source of crime that often escalates into violence and widespread insecurity, poverty and misery among our people. Our attempts to educate against cattle raiding were successful in Yirol culminating in a peace committee that has moved from different cattle camps in Yirol County but the recent violence in Rumbek and around it in Cueibet and Pacong counties stemming from individual instances of cattle raiding and revenge attacks has escalated leaving many people displaced from their homes and fearing their lives.

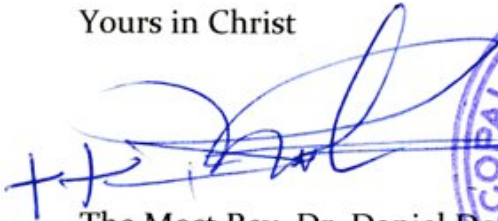
5) The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA)

The LRA has been terrorising our nation for over 15 years, killing our brothers and sisters, capturing our children, and destroying our communities, our self-esteem, and any ambition we have. They, like other militias, are supported externally facilitating them to commit atrocities that so devastate our communities. Speculation concerning the LRA's supporters points to the Northern government but this is difficult to corroborate. We would like the international community to work together in planning with the GoSS, SPLA and other agencies to see to it that the threat of the LRA is wholly and finally paralyzed, justice prevails for the victims of these atrocities in our country and that any reconciliation, if possible, will take place.

We hope and pray that partners such as AFRECS will pray earnestly for the people of the Sudan, particularly those in volatile and violent areas, whilst remembering also the church's leadership as they guide the people of South Sudan into a new epoch of gradual and actual independence for the south. We also look to AFRECS to

continue its support to the ECS and the people of the Sudan at this inchoate stage in our development. We appeal to you to make concerted efforts to fundraise and advocate on behalf of the people of Abyei, who are literally sleeping out in the open under trees and bushes and have very little access to water or food and desperately need relief.

Yours in Christ



The Most Rev. Dr. Daniel Deng Bul Yak
Archbishop, Primate and Metropolitan of the
Province of the Episcopal Church of the Sudan and
Bishop of the Diocese of Juba