

Expression of Concern on situation in Lake State

Saturday, 16 March 2013

**Dear Mr. President,
General Salva Kiir Mayardit**

I wish to express my disappointment with the current treatment of young men throughout South Sudan and in particular Rumbek. The discriminative and arbitrary arrests of youth, who are subjected to extremely brutalities on daily basis at the hands of military is unacceptable. The prolonged and arbitrary detention of countless numbers of young men without access to relatives, health services, legal aid and no promise of a court appearance or official charge are unconstitutional. What is currently occurring in Rumbek is in my opinion, undermining of justice and the rights of civilians for whom you were elected to protect.

In a democracy which is our current system of rule; elected leaders who are elected by their constituents should enforce law and order with use of police to impose rule of law. This is not the function of the military. The principle of human rights for all people must be upheld within our new democratic country. Respect for basic human rights is a sign of our own integrity and maturity as a nation; and a demonstration of our strength of character for our people and the international community at large. Every human being, widows, disabled, elderly, children and youth included, fought and died for the freedom of our country and their lives and efforts must be respected and their dignity upheld by all means.

The justice system is in disarray, random arrests are shortcuts around the Constitution which overload cases, overcrowd prisons and undermine human rights. This is unacceptable, Mr. President. If arrests need to be made, then it must be within the boundaries of the law of which prisoners should be treated with respect and dignity, court cases processed efficiently, effectively and transparently. If people are being unceremoniously arrested, without trial or conviction, there is no need for them to be arrested in the first instance.

The SPLM party Constitution requires 35% of the seats to be occupied by women and 25% of the seats to be occupied by the youth. Whilst the uncles occupy the remaining 40%, their behaviour undermines the intent of the Constitution. Youth and women who should fill the 60% as per Constitution quota are undermined and disrespected by the dominating uncles. Such quotas are irrelevant if they are not upheld by the party elites. The outward disrespect for such Constitutional regulations undermines the democratic parliamentary process, the general will and the principle of democracy.

The most dedicated supporters of the current government are from Rumbek, Aweil, Torit and Bor which are historical SPLM strongholds. The level of neglect being displayed by your government toward youth in Rumbek and Bor particularly does not reflect the sacrifices their fathers have made to the SPLA/M cause. There was no bullet which targeted only the rich or only the poor, all people suffered equally for democratic and free South Sudan. Not one person in South Sudan has fought or died or suffered only to witness their youth being tortured, oppressed, victimized and jobless in the name of democracy.

Our youth require quality education to advance them and enhance their job opportunities. These young men and women are the future of this Country. Our young men are wasting away in the bush

handed weapons, being manipulated, exploited and encouraged to fight and are then unlawfully punished by their manipulators. Nepotism, corruption and exploitation are the tail of democracy dragging us all behind and preventing household and individual advancement for all citizens equally.

Youth who have been exposed to war for all or most of their lives need support, livelihood opportunities and education. They do not need incitement and exploitation which prays upon their vulnerabilities caused by years of exposure to war and conflict. These young men have watched their mothers suffer and their fathers sacrificing, I myself lost my father in 1986 when I was age of four. We don't need to see another internal war similar to 1991 - 1994 when SPLA split. SPLA armed youth to protect their cattle during the war and are now punishing them for behaviours taught and supported by SPLA /M in the past. It is time to think of a better peaceful option to remove arms from civilians without torture. Also, the public destruction of the guns recovered is necessary to prevent them from being circulated back into the community again.

Mr. President your duty is to serve justice. Let your colleague's, widows, orphans, disabled and all people, feel that their suffering during the war has yielded the fruit of their dreams of equality, freedom and democracy. Give a chance to the press and rule of law to help you in protecting the democracy that you were elected for. These young men do not need to be beaten, oppressed, hunted down like criminals and locked away like wild animals; they are already frustrated, disillusioned and disappointed with the freedom and democracy they have tasted so far.

Therefore, I request immediate activation of the following:

- All forms of torture against civilians to cease immediately
- Youth who are not officially charged to be immediately released
- Relatives to be given urgent access to the youth who are officially charged
- The provision of legal counsel to those who require it, and
- The immediate transfer of all civilians from the military prison to the civilian prison.

Additionally, a new governor needs to be urgently, democratically elected in Lake State as per Constitution. Lake State is in a state of unrest where voters are the furthest distance from democracy, being terrorised and subject to torture through Unconstitutional martial law.

I need justice to be applied in all South Sudanese ten states; we need to believe wholeheartedly that our justice bank is not yet bankrupt! We have police and judiciary available to impose correct justice, Manyang Maker a 22 year old Australian graduate (and citizen) in criminology and justice could contribute to the solutions we need in this country, instead of being a victim of the problems in a Rumbek Military prison; let us recognize them all and their ability to invest meaningfully to this great nation, and eliminate the military rule being unlawfully imposed upon them.

Thank you Mr. President

Best regard

Manyang Mayom Meen

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Cc: VP Dr. Riek Machar



Cc: NLA Rt. Hon James wani Igga
Cc: Lakes state Military Caretaker Governor