

**SOUTH SUDAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES**

**Head Office**

**P.O Box 209 - Juba, South Sudan**



**مجلس الكنائس جنوب السودان**

**مكتب الرئاسة**

**ص - ب ٢٠٩ جوبا - جنوب السودان**

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**Your Ref:**

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**PRESS RELEASE ON ABYEI**

Abyei, the home of the Ngok section of the Dinka, was part of southern Sudan until it was transferred to the north administratively by the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium government in 1905. In 1972 and again in 2005 the people of Abyei were promised a referendum to choose whether they wished to remain in Sudan or become part of South Sudan. The Abyei Boundary Commission (ABC) passed a ruling on its border.

Abyei has been burnt to the ground three times by forces aligned with Khartoum and its people displaced to South Sudan, despite the presence of a UN peacekeeping force, UNISFA. Additionally, the paramount chief of the Dinka Ngok was also killed in the hands of the UN.

The Dinka Ngok people of Abyei decided to conduct their 'people's referendum' in October 2013. This is in line with the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005 that included the Abyei Protocol with a Right for Self-determination to choose to remain in Sudan or opt to join South Sudan.

The Abyei people have been left on their own to conduct a 'people's referendum'. Both Governments from the Sudan and South Sudan, the AU, and UN have all abandoned the people of Abyei to conduct their own referendum.

We as the church have been accompanying them and raising hope for their self-determination. Though many organs of government and international players have abandoned the people of Abyei the church will not. We stand beside the people of Abyei in the decision they have taken.

We call on the AU, UN, and the governments of Sudan and South Sudan to respect the decision of the people of Abyei.

Signed on behalf of SSCC Member Churches in South Sudan.

Rev Mark Akec Cien  
**Deputy General Secretary**  
**South Sudan Council of Churches**  
**Juba, South Sudan**  
**Mobilephone: +211912493973**

