



**INSTRUMENTS IN  
BOTH PEACE AND WAR**  
SOUTH SUDANESE  
DISCUSS CIVIL SOCIETY  
ACTORS AND THEIR ROLE

JUBA LECTURE SERIES 2016

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## **Instruments in both peace and war**

South Sudanese discuss civil society  
actors and their role

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#### **THE RIFT VALLEY INSTITUTE (RVI)**

The Rift Valley Institute ([www.riftvalley.net](http://www.riftvalley.net)) works in Eastern and Central Africa to bring local knowledge to bear on social, political and economic development.

#### **THE JUBA LECTURE SERIES 2016**

Since 2010, the RVI has organised an annual series of public lectures in Juba. These lectures are designed to promote public discussion of emerging political and cultural issues in South Sudan. This year's lectures were co-hosted by the Institute of Applied Research and Community Outreach (IARCO) at the Catholic University of South Sudan, Juba. The lectures were organized by RVI Programme Manager Ellie Hobhouse and IARCO Director Loes Lijnders, with support from the Australian Embassy in Addis Ababa.

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**COVER:** Cutting our Roots, Destroying Ourselves by Charles Obel for Ana Taban (Arabic for 'I am tired'), a community of young South Sudanese creatives who say they are tired of seeing their people suffer.

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## Preface: Civil society in South Sudan

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The Rift Valley Institute, in collaboration with the Institute of Applied Research and Community Outreach (IARCO) of the Catholic University of South Sudan, held a series of public discussions in Juba over three days in June, 2016. The participants at the event were drawn from civil society organizations (CSOs) across South Sudan. They included customary authorities, youth, women, academics, and people from the church, the media and NGOs. These representatives were asked to answer a series of questions relating to their understanding of civil society in South Sudan and its role, and what the civil society could do together in their effort to make government leaders accountable for their actions and failures to act. Finally, the civil society leaders recounted their different experiences and the difficulties they faced.

For South Sudan, the many CSO actors can be grouped into formal and informal categories. According to these categorizations the NGOs, trade unions and church bodies fall under the rubric of formal civil society while the community-based organizations (CBOs) are informal entities which include traditional authorities, youth and women's associations.

Although the phrase 'civil society' was not used as much in pre-independence South Sudan as it is today, there is a long history of groups and activities that conform loosely to its present-day definition. These consisted of traditional authorities, churches, student unions and workers trade associations—the latter two mainly in Khartoum—during the 1960s and 1970s.

Chiefs and churches, in particular, have a long history of community engagement. Compared with other CSO actors, they have a greater geographical reach, sometimes representing remote rural communities. This affords them a better understanding of the local cultures, traditional beliefs and the people's ways of life. In the words of Right Reverend Enock Tombe, Bishop of the Episcopal Church of South Sudan and Sudan and one of the speakers at the lecture series, 'in times of need, local people look first to the church and traditional leaders for guidance and support.'

Since churches do not receive funds from governments, their autonomy as community representatives is strengthened, and they are better able to hold state authorities to account. The role

of the chiefs, as paid agents of the state is more ambiguous. As community leaders, however, they enjoy the respect and loyalty of the grassroots, and, arguably, have a longer independent heritage to draw on than any other body—including the churches.

The ambiguous relationship between chiefs and the state began during the colonial period, as chiefs were the agents of the indirect rule the British established to govern the vast southern territory. The willingness of traditional authorities to participate in this form of governance varied and there were notable instances of resistance—most prominently, King Gbudwe of the Azande people who maintained an armed resistance and died in British custody.

During Sudan's first civil war in the 1970s, chiefs began to play a role that set them on a collision course with the then state authorities in Khartoum. At that time southern Sudanese intelligentsia were increasingly rejecting the state policies of exclusion based on race and religion. Many chiefs across parts of southern Sudan felt the same, and readily collaborated with the growing resistance, including the armed Anyanya rebel movement. Their moral and material support to the rebels—including sending their young men to the Congo to acquire weapons and combat training—was a contributing factor to the Khartoum government's killing of southern chiefs in Bor in 1967.

Relations between the churches and the state in Sudan were characterized by mutual distrust and hostility. The decision of General Abboud's military government (1958–1964) to expel foreign missionaries from the country in 1964 only encouraged local clergymen in their opposition to state persecution of Christians. Indeed, some of the first leaders of the Southern resistance included former church leaders, among them Fr Saturnino Lohure, the Catholic priest turned politician.

Along with their role in the struggle for South Sudan's independence, the churches have played an equally important role in peace-building and reconciliation. The most famous example is the Sudan Council of Churches (SCC), which, in collaboration with the World Council of Churches (WCC), facilitated and funded the 1971 mediation between the Government of Sudan under Jaafar Nimeiri and the *Anyanya*'s rebel's political wing, the Southern Sudan Liberation Movement (SSLM) led by Joseph Lagu. The talks ended with the parties signing the 1972 Addis Ababa Agreement which granted regional autonomy to southern Sudan. The churches later took a lead role in post-conflict rehabilitation and resettlement.

Following the 1991 split within the Sudan Peoples Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A), church leaders and chiefs held a series of peace and reconciliation conferences among southern communities. In 1999 churches and chiefs conducted reconciliation meetings between Nuer communities of western Upper Nile and their Dinka neighbours from eastern Bahr el-Ghazal. The resulting Wunlit Agreement is widely believed to have been a critical factor that led to the reconciliation and reunification of the SPLM/A three years later.

During Sudan's second civil war (circa 1983–2005), the SCC, based in Khartoum, along with the New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC), based in Nairobi, initiated and funded a South-South dialogue between the SPLM/A rebels and southern political parties. The SCC and NSCC leadership urged the movement and the parties to engage with the Government of Sudan to find a negotiated settlement to the armed conflict, which resulted in the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). The continued involvement of the church groups also led to the signing of the Juba Declaration 2006, which brought other armed groups into the CPA.

In the years following the CPA negotiations and in the run up to the 2010 elections, an increase in civic space was filled by a large number of civil society groups operating at different levels in the country and on the many issues society faced. However, as a consequence of decades of conflict, poor education, poverty and internal displacement, civil society remained underdeveloped and weak, reliant on foreign donor support.

Yet, the church continued its peace building efforts. Post-independence South Sudan immediately faced an armed conflict in the Pibor area of Jonglei state. The church leadership under Emeritus Bishop Paride Taban of Diocese of Torit mediated peace talks between the Government of South Sudan and the rebel Cobra Faction led by David Yau Yau. In 2015 the two parties made an agreement and the former insurgent leader Yau Yau became a government minister in Juba.

The role of formal and informal civil society in peace building gained formal recognition following the outbreak of civil war in 2013, when the regional body responsible for mediating the peace negotiations, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), pushed for independent South Sudanese actors to participate in a so-called multi-stakeholder symposium.

Identifying neutral actors, however, proved difficult with both parties exchanging accusations of bias and demanding the right to bring representatives of their own version of civil society. According to Bishop Enock Tombe, the members of civil society themselves also did not speak with one voice. In the event, the CSOs' neutrality was compromised as many of them backed respective warring parties, whilst diaspora representatives held views that reflected the political cultures of their host countries.

Divisions that appeared amongst the civil society representatives during the Addis negotiations have led to allegations that the government had infiltrated them. During the lectures, Isaac Kenyi, the parliamentary liaison for the churches, based at the Catholic Church's Justice and Peace Committee, described some members of the civil society as GoNOs or government national organizations, 'formed in the name of civil society' whose 'job is to counter whatever the real civil society will be doing'.

Edmund Yakani, speaking for his own organization, Community Empowerment for Progress Organisation (CEPO), accused some members of civil society of seeking positions in government instead of working towards ending the conflict. Other speakers claimed that, as CSO members, they were being accused by the government of being agents of the foreign donors who supported their organizations. On the whole, however, CSOs represented at the lectures, stressed the importance of cooperation among all their members, especially in holding the government to account.

Civil society's success lies in all its members working together, especially towards peace building in South Sudan. As in the past, when cooperation between the churches and chiefs bore fruit, so too should the current CSO components seek better ways to work together in the service of the South Sudanese communities they represent. According to Merekaje Lorna of South Sudan Democratic Engagement, Monitoring and Observation Programme (SSuDEMOP), what is important is that—in spite of the heterogeneity of the civil society sector—their interest is geared collectively towards one important issue: the stability of the country. Nonetheless, she flagged up the existence of what she calls the 'militarization of politics and politicization of the military'.

She urges South Sudanese CSOs to try and adopt new and more effective for holding the government to account. A constructive dialogue between government and CSO actors should be encouraged instead of confrontation, which is often counterproductive. Chief Wilson Peni told the lecture's participants of a public meeting



in his home state, involving politicians and members of civil society. The gathering, according to the chief, allowed members of the public to put their questions to relevant officials and the people's representatives. That experience was in all likelihood rare, but nonetheless, a process from which other states could learn.

At the time of the 2016 lectures, the Transitional Government of National Unity (TGoNU) had just been formed in accordance with the August 2015 agreement, and the leader of the armed SPLM-IO (Sudan Peoples Liberation Movement-in Opposition), Dr Riek Machar, had been reinstated as First Vice President. At that point the CSOs highlighted that in addition to their lack of freedom, the slow implementation of this peace agreement had created a legal vacuum, compounded by the slow progress in institution building. CSOs were clear that there is no alternative to the full implementation of the agreement, which includes comprehensive reforms, the establishment of hybrid courts to try war crimes and crimes against humanity, and the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to ensure that the wounds suffered by South Sudan's people during five decades' of conflict are finally addressed.

Implementation was further stalled when fighting broke out again on the streets of Juba in July 2016. Not only have the renewed hostilities threatened the peace agreement itself, drawing into question its relevance as political allegiances between the signatories continue to shift, but it also confirmed the civil society representatives' worst doubts—expressed during the lectures—that the parties lacked the good will to implement the accord in the first place. Since the resumption of hostilities, the country's security and economy have further deteriorated.

In the aftermath of the violence, the UN Security Council met with civil society representatives to discuss the threat to civilian lives. Days later, an activist who addressed the Council and called again for the establishment of a hybrid court, was shot dead. Following the incident, many civil society representatives have left the country. As mutual suspicion and instability in the capital deepen and civic space in the country closes, it seems that even with the best efforts of a still evolving civil society, the peace to which all participants in the lectures were committed, remains elusive.

Atem Yaak Atem  
Gosford  
Australia



## 1. Introduction

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Since 2010, the RVI has organised an annual series of public lectures in Juba. These lectures are designed to promote public discussion of emerging political and cultural issues in South Sudan. The fifth RVI Juba Lecture Series, hosted by the Institute of Applied Research and Community Outreach (IARCO) of the Catholic University of South Sudan, took place in late June, under the title: What can civil society do? The role of civil society in the political transition.

The backdrop to the 2016 lectures was the stalled implementation of the August 2015 Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan (ARCSS) that had brought a fragile truce to the post-independence civil war, which broke out in December 2013. A still nascent and underdeveloped civil society had played a role in this agreement.

The lectures brought together various constituents from South Sudan's civil society, to discuss the nature of civil society in the country and its past and future place in the public sphere. Over three evenings the programme focused on specific institutions, including NGOs, churches, customary authorities and the media, and how they relate to each other.

The panel discussions, followed by questions from the chair and the audience, sought to explore the role of civil society. Guiding questions were: What does the experience of working towards the peace agreement of August 2015, and the subsequent efforts to form the TGoNU, tell us about civil society in South Sudan? What can we learn from the historic engagement of civil society in peace building? How can the different civil society elements, NGOs, traditional authority leaders, and churches, work with each other to achieve their goals?

The first day of the lectures brought chiefs and pastors together to discuss the relation between churches and traditional authorities. Speakers included Madam Modi Angelo, Chief Wilson Peni, Chief Jacob Madhel and Bishop Enock Tombe of the Anglican diocese of Rejaf, chaired by John Ashworth. The second evening was a critical discussion of the role of non-governmental organizations in civil society. Speakers included Isaac Kenyi of the Justice and Peace Commission, Edmund Yakani, a prominent civil

society activist and Director of CEPO (Community Empowerment for Progress) and Grant McDonald of Journalists for Human Rights, chaired by Dr Bernard Suwa. The final evening brought together speakers from the previous evenings—chiefs, church people, NGOs and CSOs—to confront the central question of this year’s series: How can civil society contribute to the political transition in South Sudan? The panel included Paramount Chief Jacob Madhel, Akuja de Garang, Bishop Enock Tombe, and Isaac Kenyi, again chaired by Dr Bernard Suwa. The audience included students and teachers from both Juba University and the Catholic University, representatives of the Government of South Sudan, diplomats and members of the general public.

This publication is a summary of these discussions, drawn together by Ellie Hobhouse from audio transcripts of the three lectures and the notes made available by the different speakers. The report is structured along themes, rather than the three evenings of lectures. Every effort has been made to reflect the viewpoints of the speakers. All those quoted are speaking on their own behalf, presenting their personal opinions and views, not those of their respective organizations. Each quote has been verified with and approved by the speaker. Any errors that remain are the sole responsibility of the editors.

## 2. South Sudanese civil society actors

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### ‘The voice of the people’

**John Ashworth:** If I was to kick off with one question to all of you, I would ask what is unique about the position of chiefs and churches and civil society representatives in their relation to their communities?

**Bishop Enock Tombe:** Chiefs and religious leaders operate at grassroots level in the communities and provide services even in remote places where there is no government presence. They can be trusted by the community and know their problems first hand. They use local languages to communicate with their people and have better understanding of the local cultures, traditions and beliefs. They can also provide early warning on crises, much better than NGOs—they are already there because they are with the community and they know the problem better than those coming from outside. I also want to underline the issue of trust—people trust their local leaders.

This representation depends on the government system in the country. In South Sudan the government is based on a decentralized system from national, state and local government—county, payam and boma—levels. The chiefs are operating at county, payam and boma levels whereas different church denominations can be found at all levels. In fact, some church denominations have connections with regional and international church councils and networks.

**Reverend John Chol:** Based on my personal experience, when I was in my home village of Baping, in Jonglei State, chiefs were highly regarded as respected individuals. They were observed as important people in our societies. This is because of a number of reasons. They were regarded as people of wisdom. They value justice and hold firm to the rule of law as prescribed by the society. One of our chiefs was quite well known for his stand with the vulnerable and would reach out to those in need. The chiefs had a standard in terms of their influencing power, perhaps because they had access to some local resources. Their popularity also derived from their management of external relations between



communities. One unique feature in their services is the fact that they are available to the people. They are always with the people, experiencing their joys and pains together. This made them to be well respected in addition to the fact that they are regarded as people of good character and morality. All the time, when I was growing up in our community, we would be told about how Chief X has done such and such a great thing. Our paramount chief, by the name of Reech Deng Lual, was admired and well regarded. He would rule wisely. This is a unique feature of the chiefs among our people. Because of their wisdom and their proximity to the people, they have a lot of information about the community. I remember, we would always go to one of our chiefs' houses to listen to them. They would share stories of wisdom. The chiefs, I would believe, in all communities of South Sudan and Africa, are in the unique position of having the knowledge of the community. They have access to the people and are always available to help them. I think this is very important for a leader. Leaders must identify with their people. They must be available and known by their followers. Chiefs demonstrate this ministry availability effectively. It's the uniqueness of the chiefs in our lives, especially, in our communities. Similarly, the pastors, who practice ministry of availability in both the rural areas and in town, enjoy the confidence of the community. This is one of the unique aspects of the relationship between chiefs, churches and their communities, that I see. Church leaders, unlike political leaders, are available among the people. They share their concerns and joys together. This is important for a leader in their service to the people.



**Chief Jacob Madhel:** Something unique about the position of the chiefs and the church leaders is that they are really respected by their communities due to their positions, and they can advise them and their advice is listened to—they succeed if they try to convince the communities of something. They have the red card to go everywhere, without being dishonoured. That is their unique position. They are very respected within their communities.



**Madam Modi:** The chiefs and the churches are really people who are feared, in their positions. They have their own dignity when they talk about anything so that people listen to them. The same thing is true for the pastors of the churches, when there is any problem the churches have to stand together, to cool down the fire which was burning, so, after the prayers and the fasting really that fire will begin to cool down. That is why the church and the

chiefs are really people who are doing big work and it is good for us to know these people. They are experienced; they have reach over all people and their people listen to them. And we have to respect our chiefs and our church leaders because they are talking on behalf of the voiceless.

**Chief Wilson Peni:** You know very well the position of the traditional leaders in this country because most of the people who are here are South Sudanese. If you look back, you will see that we are coming very far, we are coming really very far to reach this point. Traditional leaders are unique because they are leaders who are very close to the people. In some regions in the Republic of South Sudan, some of the chiefs are not elected, they inherit the chieftaincy. Due to this, the communities pay much attention to the traditional leaders and respect them.

Because the chiefs are very close to the community, they are not political figures, they are not generally elected—although they are elected in some states—there is much respect for the chiefs; that is why the traditional leaders can mobilize people to go and build schools; that is why chiefs can also talk about the peace and this is why people pay much attention. Traditional leaders are also unique because they settle disputes between communities. I think that is what I can add: Traditional leaders are very close to the people and that is why they are being respected. That is the uniqueness that we are talking about. They are not elected or they don't play active politics.

**John Ashworth:** Here we have a section of civil society, which we often don't think of as civil society and it's an old section. The church has been here for more than one hundred years as an institution and the chiefs have been here for much, much longer than that—hundreds of years as an institution—and we have one chief with us who has been a chief for decades. What do you as church and traditional leaders think of 'new civil society'? What do you make of the civil society organizations that are now springing up? Do you have any opinion on them? Do you have any advice for them, from your wisdom? Have you had any thoughts about working with them?

**Chief Jacob Madhel:** Actors that make up civil society in South Sudan can be categorized as follows: unions of youth, women, teachers, farmers, traders, students, workers, advocates, press and media.



The core work of these civil society actors has changed over time due to the ongoing insecurity and political differences, which have really brought divisions along tribal lines



The core work of these civil society actors has changed over time due to the ongoing insecurity and political differences, which have really brought divisions along tribal lines and encouraged ethnic allegiances rather than national allegiance. Most civil society members have become supporters of their communities or they have feared this dominant state of violence.

I think before independence, there were no civil society organizations in South Sudan because we were in one Sudan. And after independence, the civil society organizations which were formed, lacked the means to build capacity and lacked civil education through which people come to understand their rights and the rights of others. We must work hard to raise the voices of the people and to help them to understand their rights perfectly and, to this end, we can ask the other partners to work in the field of civic education, to upgrade the standard of our civil society.

**Reverend John Chol:** There are some respects in which I do not consider church as civil society because we are all-encompassing and, unlike civil society actors, we don't just put pressure, we try to be with the people. We the church speak up on behalf of the people about what we are fully aware of. We facilitate essentially what the people know and want. Sometimes, I personally feel that the type of civil society that we currently have in South Sudan, (as the chief has already mentioned) is limited. Many of them, especially the leaders who are running the few civil society organizations that we have, have limited experience. They may not have been exposed and sometimes they put pressure just for the sake of putting pressure. In this regard, I personally feel, sometimes, that they really need help to have people in their organization who fully understand the issues. Perhaps the work of civil society groups may be a new idea for us due to our previous experiences. The Sudan regime had no intention of allowing an enabling environment for civil society to speak up and work together with the people, because of the way they were ruling Sudan.

However, I do not want to ignore or deny the important and useful role that civil society organizations play. I can well recall during the referendum process in 2010 in South Sudan, they did important advocacy work together with the churches. I know that their work contributed effectively to the success of the referendum vote. They can continue such a role in collaboration with the churches. The church and civil society groups can surely collaborate together. Where I hesitate, in grouping churches together with

civil society, for instance, is when some civil society organizations become partisan based on where they get their funding from. Civil society groups sometimes seem not to withstand the waves of whatever agenda is being driven at that particular time. They seem to be easily swayed to stand with whoever has the influence and funding strength at the time. The church is not persuaded by funding atmospheres. The church has been there, it is there and it will continue to be there with or without funding opportunities. The church is not supposed to be influenced by funding attractions but it does and always will accept funding opportunities for a good cause, usually for the sake of the common people.

Therefore, I still feel that civil society groups—youth groups, the women groups who are doing advocacy in this country—have to continue and to be promoted. Whether they are doing youth work or women’s work, they deserve help and support to do the work that is due for all civil society acting in the interests of the people. However, it becomes difficult when civil society becomes partisan and works for a particular agenda. The church will certainly be hesitant to support such a civil society who are partisan. I just want to say, our civil society have started well but still need to grow from just putting pressure to really analyzing issues and understanding them, not simply being moved by the winds that are flowing.

**Bishop Enock Tombe:** In the new context, there are many CSO actors that are formal and informal. The formal ones comprise NGOs, trade unions and church bodies. The informal ones comprise of networks and mutual support groups such as community-based organizations (CBOs), youth and women associations, and traditional leaders.

Before the independence of South Sudan in July 2011, there had been a lack of freedom of association and lack of freedom of expression in the old Sudan. Therefore, civil society actors were few and restricted in their activities, or co-opted by the government or liberation movements—with a few exceptions such as churches and traditional leaders. After attaining independence, a lot of civil society groups sprang up and are operating at different levels in the country on a range of issues. Therefore, independence has provided more space for operation of civil society.

I had the honour of attending the founding conference of civil society organizations of South Sudan, a few years ago, in Nakuron Cultural Centre. I was actually seconded by Archbishop Daniel Deng Bul, to be there in an advisory capacity. Most of those





During the peace talks in Addis Ababa, the [CSOs] were so divided that they were coopted by different factions [...] So we were there to mediate.

people, are young people, most below forty, maybe thirty, so they lack experience and they represent different interests, sometimes conflicting with each other.

During the peace talks in Addis Ababa, they were so divided that they were coopted by the different factions. There were those who were supporting the government (SPLM) and others who were supporting SPLM-IO, and then there were those in the diaspora, who, having experienced freedom of expression in other countries, assumed that South Sudan is just like America or Canada, misunderstanding the context. So we were asked to mediate as sometimes they had difficulty choosing their leaders and spokespersons. Through the mediation process, the churches tried to convince these disparate elements to choose. Either you are there for the interests of the people you represent or you are dancing to the tune of those that fund and you cannot pretend to be speaking on behalf of the people but then, when you get to Addis Ababa, do something different.

Having said this, I think it's a welcome group, in other countries where civil society has grown, in Europe, in North America, it is civil society which promotes democracy and I think that we need this, we need them. The challenge, of course, is the funding and they have to grow into the business.



**Chief Wilson Peni:** For me as a traditional leader, I think civil society groups in the Republic of South Sudan are positive, because even you people can hear the voice of the voiceless through civil society. Civil society are trying their best. Because they are not dependent on the government and this has real value. What can we do to promote these people? They need capacity building so that they can be able to do their work efficiently. There was a time in Yambio, the state capital of Gbudwe,<sup>1</sup> where civil society invited the cabinet and the community so that they opened a debate, whereby the executive was accountable to the community and this kind of session had never happened before in the state, where members of the Parliament debated publically. Politicians, if they are invited outside and they talk to the people, I think they can learn a great deal and adjust themselves accordingly.

**Reverend John Chol:** The church remains and always will be with the people despite the challenges. The church defines itself as the voice of the. The church will continue speaking up on the issues that are affecting the people, using its pulpit to actually speak on the challenges that people are facing. However, it is not a simple

1 Formerly Western Equatoria

thing to do in an environment where freedom of speech is limited. It is not easy to speak up on behalf of people in an environment where platforms for sharing information are also limited and challenges of infrastructure are difficult. But still the church has a commitment. Through the leaders of the church, I think the church will always remain the voice of the people. It will continue to speak up especially when injustices are prevalent and especially when the poor and vulnerable are not respected.

I reason that the only thing we can do now, as church, is to keep being available, speaking and relaying what the people are going through, and being available to the people. This is one way in which I feel we are not losing anything to the government. The church does not receive any funding from the government, so whichever way the church sustains itself, it will continue working with the people to shine as a light. Equally, the church must remind the government and other church leaders of what the people need. This morning, for instance, the church organized a prayer meeting. The church leaders spoke and prayed to God about the situation and what the people are going through. I think this is one way we can overcome our limitations.

**Edmund Yakani:** To start with, the 21 years of the struggle for the independence of South Sudan, those who worked within the liberated areas as civil society, politically defined the movement, and today that movement has converted into a government and now there is a question mark here about what civil society is. Because 21 years ago, we were all in the same trench, we were speaking the same language, we were discussing one issue but right now some of us have become government and some of us now want to hold the government accountable.

Civil society actors keep on changing from time to time. We have civil society, which typically we can define as an actor that bridges a gap between the government and the citizens. But there are those of us that are a bridge today, and tomorrow they become part of the system. And then again they walk out of the system and they act as a bridge, so we start questioning their true identity—are they really a bridge?

But who is going to invite people to come together to define civil society in the South Sudan context? To be honest with you, we need to sit down with government. For example, with the NGO bill, we are not against it but we are saying, open the bill for further discussions. We have these concerns and let's incorporate these

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concerns into the bill. Let's make sure that the way we define civil society is a definition that is home grown so that we set our own narrative and our own agenda and that this is the definition that is included in the bill. But some people have closed their minds and take the position 'you are either with us or against us'. In nation-building we cannot take this position.

**John Ashworth:** As community representatives, do the chiefs and the church leaders work together, do they collaborate with civil society groups and if so, can you tell us something about that?



**Chief Jacob Madhel:** The chiefs and the churches are both respected at the grassroots level, according to their positions. Due to that fact, if they work together they can bring peace to the people and an example of this fact is the 1999 Wunlit Peace Agreement, which was brokered by Dr Bill Lowrey, who was working for what was at that time the New Sudan Council of Churches. That peace involved two Nuer communities from Western Upper Nile and two Dinka Communities from Eastern Bahr el-Ghazal and that peace resulted in the reunification of the SPLM/A at that time. This was due to the cooperation between the churches and the traditional leaders. There were some chiefs who were flown to Lokichoggio and taken to Upper Nile and from Upper Nile they were taken to Bahr el-Ghazal and this was due to the respect that the communities owe to the chiefs and to the churches. And some other examples, for instance, when we were in Kuron in April for the meeting of chiefs and churches, organized by the Rift Valley Institute, Emeritus Bishop Paride Taban welcomed us there. These examples demonstrate how far chiefs can go, dealing with the grassroots, through support from the churches.



**Madam Modi:** It is really true that when the chiefs and the churches come together they can empower their communities to organize peace talks between youths, women and elderly people. Through public forums or using FM radio to address the public, these leaders can be in front of all the problems, although there is fire, we can jump through bullets because of the power of God. Together we can achieve peace in our country. We must lead in advocating for peace because the chiefs and churches are talking on behalf of the voiceless.

**Chief Wilson Peni:** I think, traditional leaders and churches work together these days, because before some of us traditional leaders were not Christian and some of us did not believe in God

but these days, as you can see, our young traditional leaders who are Christian, they work together from the grassroots up to the eye-level, with the church, that is what is happening in the Republic of South Sudan, particularly in Western Equatoria.

**Bishop Enock Tombe:** Actually, we can work together to enlighten people about the current peace agreement. A lot of people are not aware of what has been agreed and we are here on the ground and if this agreement was available in the local languages, I think the chiefs and the churches would be the best communicators of this message. Also, from my own experience in the Diocese of Rajaf, I have been mediating community conflicts. Often the people who are in those workshops are the chiefs, the elders, and sometimes the disputes have to do with historical issues, which the chiefs and the elders know better than the young people.

For example, I visited Lobonok, where we had some problem with our two great leaders, Lado Gore and Wani Igga—who both come from Lobonok—and they have been fighting politically here, even though they are members of the same party (the SPLM). But the conflict amongst them was affecting the local communities. It was the chiefs and the elders and the women and the youth who eventually brought them down—of course with the support of Archbishop Paulino and other church leaders and elders—and they were told to disagree in Juba but not in their home county. So you did not have conflict, it was preempted. So, the chiefs and the churches carry authority, moral authority because they have influence over the people on the ground. The people say, ‘if you have a problem within the party, you go to Juba, do not bring the problem here’ and they stop.

In order to improve their representation of their communities, chiefs and churches need to coordinate their work and speak with one voice about the needs of the people at grass-root level. From my own experience as former General Secretary of Sudan Council of Churches (SCC) from 1995-2003 in Khartoum, different churches worked together through Inter-Church Committees (ICCs) at district (*payam*) and regional (province) levels before independence of South Sudan. Given the new decentralized system of government in South Sudan, churches need to adjust their structures including that of South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC) to suit the new situation.

Chiefs and churches can organize joint peace conferences to address various issues of conflict in the community. They can also

The chiefs and the churches carry authority, moral authority because they have influence over the people on the ground.

Among civil society, there's this thing we talk about—"issue-based coalitions"—I think that is what we should look at [...] issue-based civil society coalitions addressing particular issues.



mobilize people to support the implementation of Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan (ARCSS) during the transition period of two-and-a-half years. Enlightenment workshops on the peace agreement can be conducted to make people aware of their role in the implementation of the peace agreement.

**Merekaje Lorna:** How can different civil society groups work together? I think there is no country in which civil society is homogeneous, we should accept the fact that civil society is made up of different groups and they will always be different but can come together to address particular issues. Among civil society, there's this concept that we often refer to—"issue-based coalitions"—I think that is what we should look at adopting in most cases. Therefore, the picture that I'm seeing is a number of issue-based civil society coalitions, addressing particular issues. Some groups will be addressing economic issues, others addressing issues of justice, others addressing issues of governance.

**Grant McDonald:** South Sudan has dropped 21 points on the Reporters Without Borders Safety Index, in the last two years alone. When you look at situations like last year, when Peter Moi, a young journalist, was murdered, however horrifying, the reality is that some good can come out of it. Although it is much more difficult for an individual journalist to operate here due to security concerns, there is a much stronger community feeling between journalists and I think also between civil society organizations, where you've decided that you have to come together.

For instance, there was a decision amongst journalists the next day, following Moi's death, that we were having a black-out together and it happened and it was quite a powerful thing. Another very recent example: there was a journalist detained in Yei, not too long ago and it was demonstrated that the relationship between journalists and civil society is not a one-way street. We made a call to Edmund [Yakani] and he was one of the first people to speak out and to talk to government officials and ensure that the journalist was released and was safe and was not injured during that ordeal. And this doesn't necessarily come down to your own personal connections, that comes down to civil society and what it represents and what that means if a journalist were to be held longer, you suddenly have actors such as yourselves being involved. So the differences are quite drastic but I would say it's more of a community feel between media and civil society.

### 3. Independence of civil society

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#### ‘We have the will to say no’

**John Ashworth:** Let me put a question to you all, which we often hear from people. They say, ‘you’re not independent, you chiefs, you church leaders, you’re not independent, half of you are with the government, half of you are with SPLM-IO.’ What would you say to that? Are you independent? Are the chiefs independent? Are the churches?

**Bishop Enock:** Actually, the constitution of South Sudan separates religious institutions from the state, so legally, we are independent. However, individual church leaders may be swayed by the government through gifts or positions. In this respect, the only safeguard against government control is for churches to have solidarity under the umbrella of the council of churches—the South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC). We had cases like that in the old Sudan, and the Episcopal Church of Sudan at that time passed a law that if a church leader, particularly at the level of a bishop, chooses to work with the government, then he has to resign his position to ensure the independence of the church.

For the chiefs it is more complicated, because they are part of the local government structure and because they are elected or appointed by the Commissioners. This causes us to doubt their independence—not all of them but some of them. However, as representatives of local communities, chiefs can speak independently as elected leaders and raise issues to higher government authorities.

**Reverend John Chol:** The church is accountable to God first and then accountable to the people. However, sometimes church leaders, as individuals, may fear men when there is excessive interference and intimidation, or other pressures of the time. We as a church experience circumstances in which some individual church leaders are being partisan. This morning, Isaiah Daau was speaking in the National Church and was reminding the people that we are not supposed to fear man. We are to fear God. We are to speak up when injustice is observed. You may see Bishops and Pastors always speaking about this and that to illustrate that



the church is independent. We are not obligated to please the government or opposition. We are guided by the scriptures. So I would say the church is fairly independent, even in the case of South Sudan. When individuals shy away or fear, perhaps due to some excessive forces of intimidation displayed either by the state or opposition, this is not representing the church position in any way. The church position is always a consolidated stand guided by the scriptures. The church's stand is not about compromising for injustices but compromising about the means to facilitate forgiveness and reconciliation of the people. When you see that we the church could be labelled as compromising on certain things, you must note that these may be exceptional cases to allow those means and opportunities to facilitate reconciliation.



There is lawlessness, including a marathon for government positions and the proliferation of firearms and the youth have taken this as an opportunity, under the pretext of self-protection.

**Chief Jacob Madhel:** I think the independence of both the chiefs and the churches is under threat because there is a lot of violence. All the communities are fighting each other. There is lawlessness, including a marathon for government positions and the proliferation of firearms and the youth have taken this as an opportunity, under the pretext of self-protection, in the full knowledge of the authorities. As a result, violence has become the chief means of achieving goals and protecting interests and there is evidence of this all over South Sudan.

Consequently, there is a lack of conducive atmosphere for civil society to operate. Whenever chiefs and church leaders advise peaceful co-existence and harmony, violent habits prevail. Severe lawlessness prohibits government institutions from performing their duties to support the chiefs and churches.

We have the will to say no but it is not effective. From our position as chiefs and church leaders, we shall still try to lobby for the correction of these things because we have now the deterioration of character among the communities' youth and amongst government employees. On this issue, our connection to the people is under threat and we are really not independent. I can say that.



**Madam Modi:** I can add something on that because nowadays, if freedom of speech is there, it is half way. To tell the truth nowadays, you have to be careful. If you continue to tell the truth, it will be difficult. The chiefs though, they are independent—but not all—because they have been given these positions by their forefathers and up to now they are chiefs and will continue to be chiefs. The same thing for the churches. The churches are independent

because they have their own institutions everywhere, where they preach to their congregation. Outside of these institutions, however, we do sometimes fear to communicate everything that they would want. But we are praying always.

**Chief Wilson Peni:** The chiefs in the Republic of South Sudan, some of them are being paid by the government and it seems like the government is the husband of the chiefs in this country. Because once someone is paying you, you need to listen and to obey him, whatever he wants you to do. But I am a traditional leader for my people and if I know that my people are suffering due to my husband, it is my responsibility to tell my husband that my people are suffering.

To be independent you need to have financial support. I think the church is independent because the government is not paying them, they have a source of funds, they have their donors. But we the traditional leaders, it is a big effort for us to create that through taxes raised from the people. This will lead to interference from the government, who will ask why we are taxing the people. Before we were independent because we were being paid directly by the people but these days the government has confused this relationship by paying the traditional leaders themselves and this issue needs to be addressed properly.

The other point is this, most of the traditional leaders are at the grassroots and at the grassroots they are independent. If you go back to the boma level, there is no government. There is the chief so the Executive Chief of the boma is free, is independent, because he is there. For the payam Chiefs and for the Paramount Chiefs, I think there is some restriction at these levels. But these days, even the government wants to engage at the grassroots level, by creating the position of the boma Administrator operating at the boma level. But will the law of the boma Administrator be under the jurisdiction of executive chief of that area?

The final point that I would like to make is the need for the traditional leaders to have a voice at the state and national levels. These voices are not there, as there is no forum whereby we can talk and present issues to the government and to the higher authorities. These are the challenges that we are facing, we are not operating at 100 per cent, only 50 per cent.

**Chief Jacob Madhel:** In brief, I think whenever you want to aim at a particular purpose, to let your voice be heard and to be effective, you have to organize yourselves and the chiefs have not been in



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that position of organizing themselves, for one reason: Since some COTALs [Councils of Traditional Authority Leaders] were formed, the Swiss government has supported us indeed in achieving this goal but there are some states who have not formed their councils and this is why we have no national council for traditional authority leaders. I think the COTAL bills have been implemented now in seven old states and three have still to be implemented. When the three remaining states finish this process, that is when we can form a national council, according to the Local Government Act of 2009.

**Edmund Yakani:** The major impact of the independence of this country, has been the many civil society actors joining the government and they have become hooked and that's why, if this agreement goes well, in the next elections, you should not be surprised to see some of us here, contesting for political positions. This is the reality, where some of us are abusing the space of civil society as politicians are abusing the space of political movements for individual power interests. Some of us are using civil society to sell ourselves.

I will give an example. When the 28 states were created, I was asked to go and be a Governor for my state, Yei River State and I told them, 'please stop it, my interest is South Sudan, it is not my power in the state.' When I see that South Sudan is stable and peaceful, I may think of politics. But this will not happen while we still sit at round tables, which include—and I am sorry to use this word but—remnants of the 1972 generation, who have their own problems that they have transferred to an independent South Sudan. These people are forming councils—the X Council of Elders, X Elders Forum, X Elders Peace Council—and they are abusing these words for their own personal interests. They are the ones entertaining this regionalism. They have forgotten that South Sudan is for South Sudanese, regardless of their ethnicity, regardless of their tribe. So, let's fight them, let's face them.

**Isaac Kenyi:** As a peace activist, as a long, long, long player in civil society, we always divide civil society into two: The non-state actors, I repeat, the non-state actors, who are the real civil society actors that work closely with people, take the voices of the people to the government, take the voices of the people to the market and challenges the government and challenges the market. This is what we call non-state actors, now having worked in this fraternity for a long time. But we also have, what we call GoNOs. I

Some of us are abusing the space of civil society as politicians are abusing the space of political movements for individual power interests.



don't know how many of you know about GoNOs—Government National Organisations—who are actually formed in the shape of civil society and their job is to counter whatever the real civil society will be doing.

We experienced the GoNOs when I was still working on the CPA in Khartoum. The government of Khartoum was very, very good at this and this government of the Republic of South Sudan has actually copied this practice. And most of our civil society, I think I can say, is made up of GoNOs. They are not non-state actors, but they are actually GoNOs, their interest is to counter what the real civil society is saying so that it is projected to the international community that, 'no, no, no this is not the right way, we are the right way'.

**Merekaje Lorna:** The major issue that I want to address is the question of whether donors impose their agenda on civil society or not? And whose agenda is it that civil society seek to advance? I think that there are two dimensions to this discourse. Number one, we have partners, who have come to South Sudan initially as partners but have quickly mutated into implementers. That is a big problem because they constantly block national civil society organizations from implementing programmes as they had designed. The international organizations use the might of the resources that they have so that they are able to continue implementing activities in the country and therefore other national civil society organizations feel compelled to join the international organizations. They implement the programmes as the internationals have designed—"Implementing the Donor Agenda"—while those national civil society organizations that decide not to follow the donor agenda get sidelined.

We have clearly seen this with some international organizations going to disseminate the peace agreement in our villages, that they include South Sudanese to do the work but the credit has to go to them and the administration cost, of course, goes to them. Then in that process, the civil society groups that would want to ordinarily do the work, are left with two choices, either to be co-opted as the logistics arm of the ones that have the money or stand firm and not do it and eventually get sidelined and not receive any funding.

But I want to say that the future is not all that bleak because if one sits with these partners and tries to understand their interests and in return help them to understand our interests as South



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Sudanese, then one can be able to reach a middle ground and ensure that the national civil society interest—the common good for the people of South Sudan—is also taken into account.

**Edmund Yakani:** The donors are split between two groups: the real people who give funding; and the people who act between the beneficiaries and funders. There is a second party in between here and normally the problem is with the second party, many of whom approach civil society as sub-contractors in order to implement their programmes, while sometimes neither the interests of the donors or the beneficiaries are being served.

The word donor is too big and broad and we need to define it. For me, those who act on the part of the donors—some of them, not all of them—tend to subcontract civil society and this is where the problem arises. Some of civil society who have encountered problems with these second parties, in between, take these issues to government and government then confronts the wider donor community.

So for me, maybe we need to review those that operate between the donor community and civil society. How inclusive are they, how participatory are they, how much do they take into account the concerns raised by civil society? This is how we sometimes enter into a clash or a fight whether we are seeking employment or a return on foreign aid. So we need to screen them in a genuine manner—not all of them but some of them—to avoid government taking advantage.

## 4. Government accountability

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### ‘Confronting our brothers and sisters’

**Bernard Suwa:** I would like to ask our panelists how civil society can help to ensure the accountability of government?

**Edmund Yakani:** The big question when you talk of holding government accountable in this country, is the question of safety and protection. Who is providing the safety and protection? So that when we try to hold the government accountable, when the government uses all their powers and the mechanisms that the government has, somebody is ready to protect us. That’s the big question. And that has implications in defining what civil society is. Either you start using the umbrella of civil society as an ally, or you operate behind the curtains of the system, that’s the situation challenging civil society today.

**Isaac Kenyi:** Chapter Five of the August 2015 peace agreement talks about transitional justice and accountability. This is, for me, the beginning of accountability, if civil society and all other people can push those who are responsible to establish these commissions: first, the Truth, Reconciliation and Healing Commission; second, the Hybrid Court for South Sudan; and third, the Reparation and Compensation Authority. If we as civil society, as a group can push those organizations who are overseeing this—JMEC and all those groups—to make sure that these are put in place, that this is implemented then we can ensure the accountability of government. Having said that, let me qualify this. We have to be mindful when we do this that it is the responsibility of the many civil society activists to ensure that the government of the Republic of South Sudan is not run by militia generals, who have neither the training, nor the foundation, nor the vision to form a democratic government.

In principle, you know that the situation we are in has reached a critical, decisive moment. Hundred per cent of the people employed by the state are on strike for delays in salary payments. The doctors began, followed by the University lecturers, followed by primary school teachers and now the judges. That means, the system itself is paralyzed.



Either you start using the umbrella of civil society as an ally, or you operate behind the curtains of the system, that’s the situation challenging civil society today.

Your question, of what civil society and the others can really do? We have to first define civil society. Is the civil society in our mind really made up of non-state actors? Or are the civil society put in place by the government, to speak for the government? I say this because, despite all of what is happening today, salaries are not being paid, doctors are on strike, judges are paralyzing the whole system. Where is civil society, where is that voice that is coming up? I think, before we can act, we need to examine ourselves, we need to take our own stock.



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**Akuja de Garang:** I feel it's great to have all these big names, JMEC and so on, however, I feel that these are much more top-level instruments. Civil society is supposed to be the go-between for the people and the government, however, I don't feel that the civil society are reaching enough to the lower levels, to the masses.

I am actually surprised and I have had several conversations with colleagues and friends about how we have reached the situation we are in now, with all the hunger and the striking that is going on and the masses are still asleep, almost. I don't feel like the civil society that we have here, is really doing its job. Whether I am from Pach or from JMEC or from any other group, my role is to negotiate with government. But if we are not reaching down to the people, who I am supposed to be the voice of, then I think that there is clearly a huge gap somewhere.

There are only a few people who are claiming that they brought us here, despite the fact that there are many more people who have sacrificed. We don't all hold guns but there are people who have suffered, there are women who have cooked and carried babies, we have all contributed to this. I feel almost like we are broken. Maybe we have given up and something has to give otherwise we will continue in this trend and will have a repetition of what happened in 2013. Though let me clear, I am not in any way condoning violence.



**Bishop Enock Tombe:** Blessed are the peace makers for they will be called the children of God. Whatever we do, whether we want to hold people to account, it must be a peaceful, non-violent approach. If people have not been paid for the whole year, that should not give us license to be violent because it will make it even worse.

I have three proposals to ensure accountability of government. The first is that we have to advocate for justice and good governance. These people are failing because there is no good governance or

justice and some of these people have not known this because they have been fighting injustice, and they are carrying on with the liberation as if we have not yet achieved our independence. Second, we must influence the people to elect good leaders, when the elections come, at both the county, state and the national level. And also through civic and voter education. I have very good experience in this because I headed the election team in Eastern Equatoria and we offered very good civic education.

The third one is, once a Parliament has been formed, we must follow members of Parliament up because not many of us can reach these people. In Addis Ababa, we were able to reach these people but once they become ministers, if you want to go and meet them, it is really a struggle. However, you can chase them through the MPs who report to the people.

Of course, I know that our people, up to now, don't know whose job this is. For example, in the JMEC meeting today, people thought that it was the responsibility of the international community to do it. I am a Bishop. Why should I think that the Church of England must come here to solve a problem? I am the Bishop. It is for me to solve the problem. And it is time for us to own our problems and address them, whether we are chiefs or churches or civil society activists. But the church will not accept a violent approach.

**Bernard Suwa:** It is notable that before independence you church leaders did a lot of advocacy on behalf of the communities and at some point, you were even holding the SPLM/A to account. But after 2005 and independence in 2011 you guys went to sleep because this is your government and all of a sudden there was a crack. So I am wondering if it is, in fact, a matter of focus, rather than strong leadership. Is that true for the church? That is how I feel. I am part of that church but I feel that somehow, because it is our government, we went to sleep.

**Bishop Enock Tombe:** It does seem that we have gone to sleep. We have assumed that the problem was because of the Arabs. Now we are Africans, we are Christians. These people go to church every Sunday, but to our surprise, they behave exactly the same as the Arabs. Even worse, I don't think the Arabs have delayed salaries for three months.

So this is something that we are realising now and the problem is that we are part of them and they are part of us, some of them are relatives, even the colleagues so we have a paralysis on how to advocate within the house. That is something we have to learn.

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The problem is that we are part of them [the government] and they are part of us, some of them are relatives, even the colleague, so we have a paralysis on how to advocate within the house.



Last year the church leaders went to Rwanda and they issued a statement of intent, to set up a neutral forum to ask those people, why are you not paying salaries, for example. But that forum is not yet operational. We have to continue to advocate for peace and this time not limit ourselves to only national stakeholders but also to go to the neighbouring countries and to the international community—and this has not yet been attempted—and then to work for reconciliation, which is in the agreement.

So, I think it was very easy when we had a common enemy but when the common enemy is gone and we thought we were brothers and sisters, of course you get paralysed. Because you do not expect this. It is worse, it is our own people killing us.

**Isaac Kenyi:** We all know that the church was instrumental in bringing all the peace in this country. The Addis Ababa Agreement was brokered by the Church. The church was a strong influence behind the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. In June the church leaders of South Sudan went to Kigali and asked themselves what had gone wrong. This practice of our political leaders, telling the church leaders not to preach about politics, to preach only about the Bible from the pulpit, has to change. And I think when the church leaders issued that statement of intent, the idea was to send a message to the leadership of this country that the church is changing their strategy, that they are no longer only going to be preaching but that they are going to be following all the politics in this country, whether they like it or not.

**Bernard Suwa:** Let me add to that. The church spoke yesterday and we agree on that. Can we expect the church to speak today, taking a lead, knowing that the church is also a human institution?

**Isaac Kenyi:** The church has come out clearly in this situation with a programme, including three pillars of activities: first, intensify advocacy, not only regionally but internationally, with all our partners, including the regional bodies, IGAD and everyone; second, the church has to bring all these fighting forces, these broken families, into a neutral forum, where they can now come and discuss the issues of why they are so much into these problems and troubles—this the church has agreed to do it and they are committed, through the Council of Churches, to take that up; and third, the church says, after all this, the reconciliation, which it is the mandate of the church to facilitate, this time it's not going to

be politicised but it is going to be more spiritually enriched. It has to be different.

**Merekaje Lorna:** What I want to say, regarding the question of how civil society can help to ensure accountability, is that I think we need to create demand. There is no demand from the population. We are part of the society and if there is no demand from the society it is quite difficult for civil society alone to call for accountability. So what we need to do is to educate the masses so that they understand it is their obligation to demand accountability. That's what we do through civic education and through these kinds of conversations. My organization, SSuDEMOP, for example, has a lot of town hall meetings to open the eyes of citizens.

I want to say, that I agree with the Bishop, we are suffering from a kind of paralysis—there is citizen apathy in this country, which needs to be treated so that we have a country that is moving forward where everybody knows their responsibility and their rights. And that apathy is reflected even amongst elites in this country because many of us say that the TGoNU has been formed, but this is a lie. South Sudan has a partially formed government only because the three branches of the government are not complete. The legislature is not yet formed therefore we have no business sitting back and saying that the government is formed. It is yet to be formed.

**Chief Jacob Madhel:** Both chiefs and churches play a vital role in helping to ensure the accountability of government, steering their communities towards peaceful coexistence and the stability of the entire nation. This can come through a normal approach, advice, and not by means of demonstrations. The chiefs and churches advise government on how bad the reality on the ground is and they supplement this with solutions.

A chief, as a representative of government, should ask and can be answered without the need to demonstrate violently. The chiefs and the churches are the strong hand of the government of South Sudan on matters of peace and reconciliation. Therefore, their polite advice can be admired for the benefits for the government and the people.

The barriers experienced would be the Arab Spring scenario, where people of one nation caused the killing of their own people and brought about a great deal of destruction to their advanced infrastructure. We here, also, have experienced that in our two-year national conflict. Similar crises were experienced in



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two neighbouring African countries, Rwanda and Kenya, who have since maintained peaceful coexistence.

Another barrier to the operation of an alliance of civil society, is spreading violence spear-headed by those opposing government, and by the communities against themselves. Truly, there will be no real accountability unless there is real peace and let us hope that ballot boxes in the year 2018 will be a decisive time where South Sudanese people shall exercise their right to vote.



**Grant McDonald:** In the context of many countries, South Sudan included, there must be a strong connection between journalism, civil society and the government—a symbiotic relationship to a certain degree. There must be an understanding that by allowing open communication to exist between these three distinct areas of society. There must be trust.

I want to comment also on the mechanisms of holding nation-building partners, or governments, accountable. There are a couple of different avenues you can take and the largest mechanism, which I will obviously push for, is media, and using it in a way which is actually not too aggressive because sometimes as much as you want to be aggressive in order to get something done, you need to take a different approach. I am speaking specifically of a solutions-based journalism, if you will.

The example that I always use: If there is a borehole in a community which is not working, and a journalist comes to cover the story, instead of writing an article that talks about the horrible job that the government has done, they instead speak with the CSOs in the area and with the community itself, who actually give their own solutions because, believe it or not, everyone has some wonderful ideas and if you just speak with them and give them a voice they usually have something great to say. If they don't, their neighbours probably do and if they start discussing it then maybe they'll come up with a great idea together. But if you're able to then go to those who are accountable for ensuring that that borehole is fixed and not just approach them in an aggressive way but approach them by saying these are very good ideas coming from your community, then suddenly the journalist and the media are acting as this liaison between public and private citizens. By writing this article you can prompt the person in charge of the borehole to make positive changes. There's a stronger relationship built on that type of engagement and mechanism, which can be applied all over.

There must be an understanding that by allowing open communication to exist between these three distinct areas of society. There must be trust.

## 5. Civil society in peace building

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### ‘We must put our house in order’

**Bernard Suwa:** The question we are asking is how can chiefs, how can churches, how can NGOs, how can civil society contribute to a sustained peace in this post-conflict situation? For you, a chief, a bishop, a civil society representative and an activist, what must come first for you in this early period of transition, to enable your individual and collective efforts to flourish?

**Merekaje Lorna:** I must say that this is a very important conversation and it is good that we are having this conversation at this moment. I want to move away from saying that it is late but rather say, it’s good that we’re having the conversation now. This evening, I want to talk a bit about the experience of civil society in working towards the peace agreement and I will look at that question in terms of the process and perception. In terms of the process, indeed there are several lessons that we should learn as civil society and as South Sudanese, one of which is that nation building is not an easy process and neither is peace negotiation.

It is not made easier due to the fact that when political leadership or the warring parties get to the table, they don’t see us anymore. All they see is power and power and power. To make them see people or put names and faces to the casualties suffered in the conflict is very difficult. Unless you are very persistent and resilient, it is almost impossible to make them recognize the voice of the civil society. Such processes require perseverance and having one goal—to make sure that people’s interests are reflected in these numbers and these statistics and that the conversation is not only about power.

The other thing that I want to say about perception, is that usually in those kind of spaces, the parties seem to see themselves as the rightful people to decide for the country yet they are the same people who are fighting among themselves and killing the people they claim to govern. I think the question that we South Sudanese need to ask ourselves and our brothers and sisters who have been driving this country from 2005 until today, is: ‘what is it that they can do better than what they did since 2005 until 2013?’ I have been on record saying that, ‘with due respect, you have done



Nation building is not an easy process. It is not made easier by the fact that when political leadership or the warring parties get to the table, they don’t see us anymore. They only see power and power and power. To make them see people is very difficult.

your best and it resulted in the events the country witnessed in December 2013'. Let's now think on how best we can take South Sudan forward with contributions from all South Sudanese. What is good for South Sudanese needs to be defined differently from what we were doing from 2005 until December 2013. We have to challenge long-held assumptions and constantly redefine what is best for the country, reminding ourselves and the political players that we are all stakeholders in this process and South Sudan belongs to all South Sudanese regardless of our ethnic, social or political affiliation.

The other thing I want to talk about, is how can CSOs, NGOs and media contribute to sustainable peace and nation building efforts. If you look at the agreement, it talks about legislative reviews, reform and transformation processes. This cannot be successfully done if we are too busy globetrotting and not sitting in our offices to plan and strategize for South Sudan. I do appreciate what our government officers do but I think in that kind of schedule it is difficult for them to meaningfully plan because some of them come from one plane, cross the runway to another plane to go for another meeting—for the sake of this country, I hope. But while they are doing that, they don't have time to do critical thinking and planning. So it's important for the other actors to be able to do the critical thinking and designing what needs to be achieved in order to build our country. This is the only way we can benefit from comparative advantage of each stakeholder and build our country.

Today, we are suffering from the militarization of politics and the politicization of the military. This can be attributed to the history of our country being born out of a liberation movement. During the liberation, everybody was part of that struggle and I think that the time has come for South Sudanese to acknowledge that now we are an independent nation, not a liberation movement. The military must be separated from politics and the three arms of government must maintain their independence. We need to choose our fronts. If you want to choose the front of educating our people, then don't go and seek guns and ammunition. And if you have chosen to remain to protect the people, don't go and infiltrate the political space because issues like governance, political processes, legislative review and reform processes need critical thinking and cannot be done adequately if people are busy fighting in the front line. So I want to advise that let's try and divide roles amongst us as daughters and sons of South Sudan.

We need to choose our fronts. If you want to choose the front of educating our people, then don't go and seek guns and armoury. And if you have chosen to remain to protect the people, don't go and infiltrate the political space.

Lastly, I want to reiterate that I am particularly passionate about community engagement. I think everyone who has ever attended a discussion like this—I want to congratulate you for your participation. In this country, the educated and the uneducated, the illiterate and the literate, are not used to the culture of attending public lectures or public dialogue. We usually shy away from public discussions. But I want to stress that this is the best way of engaging communities, because unless you talk to people, you will not know what they think or want. But unfortunately in South Sudan, we don't have a town hall. It's difficult to get permission even to talk to people at the mausoleum. We need a public place so that as South Sudanese we can converse in open spaces, in which we are able to interact. South Sudanese need town halls or even a community hall.

**Isaac Kenyi:** The political situation in our country has reached a decisive moment. In all these events, civil society was largely silent and people really questioned whether we had civil society in this country.

You know experiencing the peace negotiations, which you raised rightly, Lorna, all of us representing civil society, representing the women's block and faith-based leaders of South Sudan, signed the agreement on the seventeenth of August. Their signing makes them stakeholders and responsible for the implementation of the agreement and they are not going to run away from it. History will judge them. They signed it. They have to implement it and those who fail to implement, they have the right to question them. Did we hear any of them raising any voice since the agreement was signed, until today?

Having said that, let me also give my experience when I was in Addis. Me, along with the people of South Sudan, were disappointed with the way civil society behaved during the negotiations in Addis. Their approach was elite-driven. They forgot to represent the people, they forgot that the people had a case to make and people looked to them to carry the case to the table and they failed to do that. They failed even to address or raise the issue of the root causes of the problem. As soon as the IGAD floated that symposium, which brought about the Transitional Government of National Unity (TGoNU), everyone wanted to be part of the government and they completely forgot the role they were supposed to be playing, representing the people and representing their issues.

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The agreement itself recognized that there must be change in the government, that there must be reforms in the government, very, very clearly. The agreement even said that upon signing, the IGAD mediators plus those who signed the agreement will form a constitutional amendment committee, whose job—whose responsibility—it is to incorporate the contents of the negotiations into the agreement, so as to make it legal. This committee is supposed to finish the constitutional drafting in 21 days and complete the drafting to all the amendments to the SPLA Act, to the National Security Act, to the Prison Act, to the Police Act and to the Wildlife Act, in order to conform to the agreement itself, within 45 days. No later than ninety days from signing the agreement, they were supposed to form what they called Expanded Transitional National Assembly, which will be comprised of 400 members. We are almost nine months since the signing of the agreement and all this has yet to happen.

The TGoNU has been formed but the question we are asking as activists is: what mandate is this government really working with? Do they have any constitution that warrants them to really operate in this country? Where is the position of First Vice President in the constitution? Are we really running this country without a constitution and if we are, where is civil society, what are they doing? Can they hold these people responsible or perhaps they can't? And if they can, why are they quiet? This is the question that I really want us to look at, all of us together, with you.

The TGoNU has now been in office for almost one month. According to the agreement, as soon as they are in office they are supposed to establish the transitional justice institutions including the Commission for Truth Reconciliation and Healing; they are supposed to establish an independent hybrid body for South Sudan, to be known as the Hybrid Court for South Sudan; they are also supposed to establish the Compensation and Reparation Authority. And these institutions are supposed to be working independently. What happened? Where is the civil society?

To save this country, civil society has to do the following. First, we need to design a programme for the systematic and consistent implementation of the peace agreement—if they do that, they will save this country. Second, we should engage the TGoNU, Legislative Assembly, to institute the specific structures that the agreement had spelled out, such as the Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing so that dialogue is initiated between these communities for a genuine reconciliation. In 2004, we

were in the same situation as we are today, the people of South Sudan decided, through the churches to call a sub-dialogue, which brought together all the people and made it possible for the CPA to be implemented peacefully. We need that now. Third, civil society must follow the communiqués, of the extraordinary session of the Council of Ministers of IGAD. They must respond to the call for a reversal of the 28 states decree, demand the full implementation of this agreement in letter and spirit, demand that those implementing it must incorporate the agreement into the Transitional Constitution of South Sudan amended in 2015, so as to make this government, which is in office, legal.

**Edmund Yakani:** I would like to correct some information that comes from Isaac, regarding the Constitutional Amendment Committee. The agreement specifically and straight-forwardly limited this committee to be formed by the political actors and not other stakeholders of the agreement, that is civil society, women, youth and religious leaders. So, we are not part of this committee by the provisions of the agreement, and you cannot blame us for not talking. It is because we don't sit at that table and we have been demanding it.

But obviously, the biggest improvement to enhancing the role of civil society lies in the duties and responsibilities of the state. In terms of legislation, there is much interference with civil society and in terms of individuals. In this society where we believe too much in ethnicity and we do not have nationalism. Ethnicity is used as a card to measure your representation, regardless of whether a person is representing your interests. If you politicize ethnicity, you start moving towards militarizing ethnicity. Because of that angle, you start politicizing the military and you start militarizing politics. That is the society we are in. In the SPLA barracks, if you fail to pursue the political interests of the parliament, bullets start coming up.

The big question for me is, can we work altogether to build a national identity that we all subscribe to? Not according to our tribes, not according to our ethnic groups. South Sudanese society at all levels is structured along ethnic lines. If I want to start an organization I first go to my home town, to start doing foreign aid business there and I forget about other South Sudanese, who are remote and need services and who I should be drawing attention to. For me, that is the biggest challenge—ethnicity—because it affects us all: political movements, civil society and it has even



extended to faith-based groups and the judiciary, with tribal judges.

My final point, which I would like to put forward in response to my Uncle Isaac, is that in many instances, those few of us who represent the citizens, we are accused of representing the interests of the West and these civil society representatives are even threatened with court, and I am talking of my own experience. And I say, let him go to the court, because for me there is nothing more important than protecting public interests. You have state power today and what is it used for? To modify state power. And this is the history of South Sudan. Those who come to power become more oppressive than those that went before them.



After the incident of the December 2013, our communities have been divided along tribal ethnic lines. For us to overcome that, we need to have civic education among ourselves and among our communities to change the mind-set.

**Isaac Kenyi:** Before the war, when the enemy that we had was Khartoum, everyone in South Sudan, including the civil society, including the community, had one enemy and one agenda and so it made it easier for civil society to engage with the civilians or with the communities. After the incident of the December 2013, our communities have been divided into tribal elements or tribal ethnic lines. So anybody who comes to whichever community, the first thing they ask is where is he coming from. For us to overcome that, we need to have civic education among ourselves and among our communities, to change the mind-set, so that we accept ourselves not as ethnic groupings, not as tribes but as Southern Sudanese brothers and sisters. But as long as we continue as we are today, without properly drawing up a programme that addresses this mind-set, we will still have problems to address.

Last month I was in Wau, trying to talk to communities there. The communities in Wau feared what they called 'a red line'. Other communities do not cross this line. If you are from this community, you don't cross there. When I called for them all to come, they were able to come because I did not belong to any of them. So, that means we really have to have a programme for liberating our mindset.

**Bernard Suwa:** Civil society plays vital roles in the areas of social justice, as components of peace-building processes such as economic recovery, poverty reduction processes, creation of employment, engagement in monitoring and advocacy on how public finances and natural resources are disbursed, and facilitation of service delivery and socio-economic reintegration. More importantly, we must acknowledge that civil society fosters social

justice, without which peace and social cohesion remains incomplete and will forever remain fragile.

Civil society can also contribute immensely towards psychosocial recovery processes, through trauma healing processes, and community reintegration and reconciliation. Also, the roles of civil society can be entrenched in justice and rule of law dynamics, and should therefore support issues of human rights, justice assistance, alternative and traditional justice measures, access to justice, and transitional justice mechanisms. Finally, the role of civil society is to effectively engage in advocacy and operationalization around security issues, such as security sector reform, the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants, and small arms, for example.

It is envisioned that the CSOs in post-conflict countries such as South Sudan must engage in four main areas, namely: First, creating an active society through enhancing social capital; second, fostering conflict management; third, advocating for social justice as a necessary component for peace; and fourth, Participating in post-conflict reconstruction processes.

**Creating an active society through enhancing social capital:**

Civil society is not simply a sum total of its members, but the connectivity and the networking between and among members are also critical dynamics, which to a large extent, creates synergy and the critical mass to engage its members toward a reform agenda. Given the absence or the collapse of formal state institutions, the communities, mainly through the CSOs, NGOs and Churches, must take on roles that would, otherwise, have been performed by the state.

**Fostering conflict management:** The implementation of human rights standards is usually a precondition to any peace process, especially in the country with a history of human rights violation like ours. Where human rights conditions are not observed, the ground is ripe for protracted conflict. In this regard, the civil society groups in South Sudan are expected to engage in the promotion and upholding of human rights standards.

**Advocating for social justice as a necessary component for peace:** Social justice is a necessary component for peace. The component of social justice has, for a long time, been incorporated into peace building and identified as a necessary element

We must acknowledge that civil society fosters social justice, without which peace and social cohesion remains incomplete and will forever remain fragile.



of any peaceful society by the International Labour Organization (ILO).

**Participating in post conflict reconstruction processes:** In situations of protracted conflicts, reconstruction and peace building processes are slow and tedious. Many peace efforts have failed where sufficient attention was not paid to post-conflict reconstruction and equity. Once relative peace has been achieved, it is important that the process of the reconstruction of new social environments, aimed at enhancing the quality of life and improving the conditions of those affected by the conflict, must be one of the top priorities.



**Akuja de Garang:** In discussing the role of civil society organizations in the political transition in South Sudan, I would like to draw attention to the individuals that make up these organizations. For these organizations to play their intended role, which is to provide a platform for civic dialogue for progressive societal transformation, their intentions need to be aligned with the core principles of civil society organizations.

Others have spoken about the fact that in many cases South Sudanese civil society organizations are formed along tribal lines and their objectives tend to be aligned towards serving the agenda of their particular tribe or social grouping. Unfortunately, this is true in many cases. However, we need to recognize that these organizations are a microcosm of the whole state of South Sudan so we should not be surprised.

We need to ask ourselves why these civil society organizations and South Sudan as a whole have adopted the tribal route in such a self-destructive manner. Being of a particular tribe in itself is not the problem. Human beings have an instinctive need for social cohesion however this instinct can easily overwhelm reason especially in settings where there is already a sense of distrust. South Sudanese have for a long time used the 'tribe card' for political and personal gains—as an excuse to place blame, discredit or mistrust each other.

The mistrust that South Sudanese have in each other is, I believe, a build-up of past traumatic experiences we have gone through—where we have killed, maimed, kidnapped, abused and impoverished in the name of tribe. The intensely violent behaviour, I would argue, is a symptom of these past experiences. All South Sudanese are suffering from one form of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or the other. Trauma manifests itself in various

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forms: from outward, angry, reckless and aggressive behaviour, fear and hatred of others to passive internalized self-hatred. I am sure we can recognize one or two of these behaviours in ourselves or those close to us. These traumatic experiences cannot be brushed under the *hasira*, under the mat. There is a lot of self-healing that needs to happen, starting from ourselves as individuals who make up these civil society organizations. Otherwise the objectives of these CSOs will continue to be overshadowed by the need to affiliate with one's tribe.

Repressing these issues, has, I believe, led to one too many bad decisions that lead to innocent people dying, including the most recent incidents of violence where our leaders did not trust each other. For South Sudanese to break this cycle of violence we need to address the trauma not only of this generation but of past generations as well. Otherwise we are likely to repeat this pattern for many generations to come. However, as in many societies, talking about trauma or any other form of mental illness in South Sudan is a taboo.

Sometimes I think that South Sudanese have been traumatized to the point of apathy and indifference. For example, we have all felt the pinch of the recent economic crisis. On one hand, I admire the resilience of South Sudanese in finding ways to survive but on the other hand, I wonder why we have not seen any reaction such as uprising common in other countries—though, I am in no way condoning violence. Why have the civil society organizations not been able to provide space to bring these issues to the forefront? I believe we South Sudanese are just too traumatized to even lift our voices.

**Bishop Enock Tombe:** Those who are familiar with John Lederach's pyramid: the civil society, the traditional leaders, the church leaders, they are all in the middle; and you have at the top, the political leaders and the military leaders; and at the bottom, you have the people. What is required is for us to work horizontally together and then vertically upwards and vertically downwards, so there are three approaches. Horizontal is first agreeing how and on what to work together and also to deal with the issues related to those at the top and do the same for those people at the bottom.

For an example of horizontal engagement: the people-to-people (P2P) peace process, a grassroots approach which brought the people and the church together—Chief Jacob mentioned this—at the Wunlit Peace Conference of 1999, which ended the conflict



between the Dinka and the Nuer. An example of working upwards: during the CPA period, we were supporting the right of self-determination. It only worked when we agreed as churches and issued that famous statement, 'Let my people choose', in March 2002, in London. And as soon as that statement was issued, four months later, the government, at that time in Khartoum, and the SPLA were able to reach the Machakos Protocol—the first protocol in July, four months later—because of this document, which we did together with our partners.

That is how we can work together and now that an agreement has been signed, we need to work together to ensure that this agreement is implemented in letter and in spirit. I have just come from a JMEC meeting and there are issues there that we need to address together. For example, the Assembly. Up to now, the politicians have not agreed to form the Assembly and the Assembly is part of the government, if you don't have the Assembly, forget about this agreement because there is no oversight. These politicians will continue to disagree. They are still calling themselves IO and they do not speak with one voice.

I think it is good to share from experience, and those of you who were in the liberated areas: the churches tried to deal with the disagreement within the SPLA in 1991, by trying to talk to the top leadership and they failed. Then they changed their approach and went to the communities and they found out that the strength of these political leaders is in the communities. So that is why they had success when they worked with the communities, as with Wunlit and others later on the Liliir, Waat and the Strategic Linkages Conference and so on. Maybe we need to do this again.

We have to agree on the common issues, and the agenda now. If we want to have peace, which is lasting, let us start there. The problem we are facing now is that we often hear of a lack of resources but I want to assure you, in Rajaf diocese, where I have worked now for six years, it is the people who invited me to facilitate their peace processes because they trust the church. If we can make ourselves available, not waiting for a donor but ready to sacrifice for the sake of peace, then we can help these people.

**Chief Jacob Madhel:** I would say that the most important thing that civil society can do is to ensure the joint efforts that are needed from all the stakeholders to work together. Because our communities are now fighting each other, there is no stability and for that reason, without peace, all joint efforts will be in vain. But we shall

Peace is the most important thing, to be started from the grassroots, to go to the top. Because now we are suffering from community fights and insurrection everywhere [...] Therefore, we have to unite and deal first with peace among ourselves.



not stop, we shall be trying hard to sensitize our communities, to come together and work for community-to-community peace.

Simply, peace is the most important thing, to be started from the grassroots, to go to the top. Because now we are suffering from community fights and insurrection everywhere in South Sudan. Therefore, we have to unite and deal first with peace among ourselves. After that, we can ask our government to let the people have their own peace and we will support this. As a representative of the traditional leaders, working in that field for 33 years, I can say that they are both good and bad instruments. They can mobilize for both peace or war.

I came from Twic area, in which there has been no tribal fighting for 32 years. Up to this moment, we did not fight our neighbours. We exercise peaceful coexistence and people learn this from examples as I have said before, like the Wunlit peace initiative, which was brokered by the New Sudan Council of Churches, with participation and support from the chiefs. We have to let the chiefs do more peace work. They have to be sensitized to alert their grassroots to accept only peace. The key is to talk to our communities through the traditional leaders, and ask them to support the other stakeholders.

The chiefs and the churches can better represent their communities at the sub-national and national level on matters related to peace and reconciliation. They are neutral and better placed to act as peace brokers because of their proximity to the communities. Since the churches are also confidently trusted in peace mediation—although the neutrality of the churches is not 100 per cent—their cooperation with the chiefs can be of great importance and have great and positive impact. Their work together in peace building can be fruitful indeed, since the chiefs are overall rulers of the grassroots which form the communities.

Examples of chiefs and churches working together in peace building—before and after independence: First, the Wunlit Peace Covenant, 1999, which ended the eight years of fierce conflict between the Nuer of Western Upper Nile and the Dinka of Eastern Bahr El-Ghazal. This peace successfully resulted in SPLM/A unification (between the Nasir faction of Dr Riek Machar and the SPLM/A mainstream). It is worth noting that the SPLM/A differences at that time took the same tribal and ethnic dimensions as in the current conflict. Second, the Greater Pibor Administrative Area (GPAA) Peace Agreement, May 2014. The accord between David Yau Yau's Cobra Faction and the South Sudanese government was 100 per

Since the churches are also confidently trusted in peace mediation [...] their cooperation with the chiefs can be of great importance [...] Their work together in peace building can be fruitful indeed.

cent brokered by the church and supported by the traditional leaders. Third, the Arrow Boys agreements with the government of South Sudan (the Yei and Mundri Accords), negotiated by church leaders, who left no stone unturned for the purpose of peace and reconciliation. Fourth, the Aguok and Apuk communities in Greater Warrap—peace and reconciliation has been achieved twice, in 2008 and 2016 through joint efforts from both chiefs and churches.

I would like to re-iterate what has been said by Henry Ford: ‘Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is a process; working together is success.’ In order to let the chiefs/churches work together for a sustainable peace amongst all South Sudanese communities, there should be established peace and reconciliation committees or councils, at the boma, payam and county levels. These peace and reconciliation committees should be for the express purpose of early awareness on conflict and to mediate and solve minor problems before it could expand or escalate: ‘A problem usually starts very small and if neglected, it can escalate and expand.’

These proposed peace and reconciliation committee members should include chiefs and churches as well as other civil society members. All non-political actors, who are to work voluntarily. By virtue of their positions in the given area: boma, payam and county, their normal and daily activities allow them to interact deeply with all members of the community in their locality and they are owed respect by most of the inhabitants in the area. They are listened to by their community members and knowledgeable in terms of the characters and behaviours of the people in their areas. They would be thoroughly home-grown peace initiatives.

## Glossary of acronyms, words and phrases

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Anyanya	( <i>Madi</i> ) snake venom; a Southern Sudanese guerrilla separatist movement
ARCSS	Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan
boma	village; lowest local government administrative unit
CBO	community-based organization
COTAL	Council of Traditional Authority Leaders
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreements
CSO	civil society organization
GoNO	government national organization
<i>hasira</i>	( <i>Arabic</i> ) mat
ICC	Inter-Church Committee
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
JMEC	Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission
NSCC	New Sudan Council of Churches
NGO	non-governmental organization
Pach	A South Sudanese non-profit which means 'awakening' in a number of Nilotic languages
payam	second lowest administrative division in the South Sudanese state administration, below the county
SPLM/A	Sudan Peoples Liberation Movement/ Army

SPLM-IO	Sudan Peoples Liberation Movement-in Opposition
SSC	Sudan Council of Churches
SSCC	South Sudan Council of Churches
SSuDEMOP	South Sudan Democratic Engagement, Monitoring and Observation Programme
TGoNU	Transitional Government of National Unity
WCC	World Council of Churches

## Notes on contributors

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**Akuja de Garang** is a conflict management, humanitarian and development expert with extensive project management experience in fragile states. She has lived/worked in Khartoum, Cairo, Bristol, London, Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Nairobi, Rumbek and Juba. She returned to live in South Sudan in 2004. In 2012, Akuja founded a local NGO, Pach. Its objective is to research, document and promote preservation of South Sudanese cultural heritage.

**Atem Yaak Atem** is an independent journalist and author. He was the founding editor of *Southern Sudan Magazine*, published by the former Southern Regional Ministry of Information and Culture. During the war he was one of the founding journalists of Radio SPLA and also worked with the Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Agency, the relief arm of the SPLM/A. After the war he founded the weekly *Pioneer* newspaper in Juba and served briefly as Deputy Minister for Information. He is completing his autobiography.

**Bernard Suwa** has long standing expertise working on issues relating to conflict, governance, reconciliation and peace building at both the community and national level in South Sudan. After the outbreak of the conflict in 2013, Dr Suwa helped to establish the National Secretariat of the South Sudan National Committee for Healing Peace and Reconciliation (CNHPR) and conducted research into the border conflict between communities on the South Sudan–Uganda border and developed a framework for traditional conflict resolution mechanisms. More recently, he worked with RVI to facilitate a national meeting of chiefs and churches in Eastern Equatoria. Dr Bernard holds a PhD in Education from the University of Western Sydney, Australia.

**Bishop Enock Tombe Stephen Loro** was elected and served as General Secretary of Sudan Council of Churches (SCC) for two terms—1995–1999 and 1999–2003 in Khartoum. In 2009 he was elected as Bishop of ECS Diocese of Rejaf. From 2005–2015 he served as a member of Board of Governors of Nairobi Peace Initiative Africa (NPI/A). He was a Team Leader of Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs) during the South Sudanese peace negotiations in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 2014 to 2015. In 2015 he became a member of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission



(JMEC) in Juba that monitors the implementation of August 2015 Agreement for Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan.

**Chief Jacob Madhel Lang Juk** was born in 1953, in Aweng Village, Twic State. In 1983 he succeeded his father—who served for 43 years in the position—as Akuar Paramount Chief. He served for almost 33 years. During this time, he founded the Warrap State Council of Traditional Authority Leaders (COTAL) Centre, in Kuajok and served as Chairperson for the COTAL for 8 years (2008–2016). In February 2016, he was appointed Peace and Reconciliation Advisor for Twic State.

**Chief Wilson Peni Rikito Gbudue** inherited the position of Executive Chief of Rimenze *boma* in 1995 and later became the Paramount Chief for Yambio County in 2005. He was elected as Chairperson for the Western Equatoria State Council of Traditional Authority Leaders (COTAL) in 2004 and was confirmed in this position with the passing of the COTAL Act in 2013. He is from the royal family of the Azande.

**Edmund Yakani** is Executive Director of the Community Empowerment for Progress Organization (CEPO) and a vocal actor in South Sudanese civil society. He has extensive expertise in the fields of governance, human rights, rule of law and gender.

**Grant McDonald** is the South Sudan Country Manager with Journalists for Human Rights (JHR)—an organization which focuses on the development of local journalists around the world. Grant has also lived and worked in Liberia with Journalists for Human Rights doing one on one journalism mentorship with local journalists. Grant also works as an International Correspondent for Radio France International, and has taught at Juba University. Prior to his work in East Africa he was a news anchor and reporter for almost a decade in Toronto, Canada.

**Isaac Kenyi** is the parliamentary liaison for the churches and is based at the Justice and Peace Committee of the Catholic Church. Before the signing of the August 2015 Peace agreement, he functioned as a representative of faith based organizations at the IGAD negotiations in Addis. He has long standing experience as a civil society activist, in various capacities.

**John Ashworth** has worked in Sudan, South Sudan and the Eastern and Southern African regions for more than thirty years in various fields, including humanitarian aid and development, education,

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**Madam Modi Angelo Ukuko** is from the royal family of the Azande. She has been working with the Western Equatoria State public health county department for many years and as a pastor in the episcopal Church. She was elected as a member of the Western Equatoria State Council of Traditional Authority Leaders (COTAL) in 2014.

**Merekaje Lorna** is the Secretary General of South Sudan Democratic Engagement, Monitoring and Observation Programme (SSuDEMOP). She was one of the civil society representatives who participated at the IGAD-led South Sudan peace negotiations in Addis Ababa. She was the co-chair of the Civil Society Referendum Task Force and also one of the convenors for the Civil Society Monthly Forum.

**Reverend John Chol Daau** is an Anglican priest originally from the Diocese of Bor, Episcopal Church of South Sudan and Sudan. Rev. Daau is Advocacy and Peacebuilding Manager seconded by CRS to the South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC). He takes on this role from his government senior position as Director General for Vocational Training with Ministry of Labour, Public Service and Human Resource Development in the Government of South Sudan. By profession, Rev. Daau is a teacher, preacher and writer. He is on faculty of Daystar University in Kenya and the author of *God's Refugee: The Story of a Lost Boy Pastor*.

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## Selected RVI publications



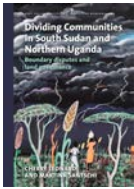
### **We Have Lived Too Long to be Deceived: South Sudanese discuss the lessons of historic peace agreements**

A record of a series of public lectures on historic peace agreements that took place at Juba University in December 2014.



### **My Mother Will Not Come to Juba: South Sudanese debate the making of the constitution**

Debates at the Juba University on the new constitution, examining challenges, reasons for delay, and questions of public participation in constitution-making.



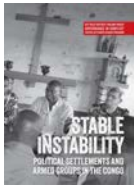
### **Dividing Communities in South Sudan and Northern Uganda: Boundary disputes and land governance**

This report argues that boundary disputes must be understood in the context of changing land values, patterns of decentralisation and local hybrid systems of land governance.



### **The Sudan Handbook**

A guide to Sudan and South Sudan and the historical processes that shaped them, written by leading specialists and edited by John Ryle, Justin Willis, Suliman Baldo and Jok Madut Jok.



### **Stable Instability: Political settlements and armed groups in the Congo**

This report analyses the stability, inclusivity and levels of violence of both the political settlement of the Congo as a whole and of political settlements in the conflict-ridden east. *Aussi en français.*



### **Un microcosme de militarisation: Conflit, gouvernance et mobilisation armée en territoire d'Uvira**

Ce rapport analyse la militarisation en territoire d'Uvira et la manière dont celle-ci façonne les rapports entre conflits locaux, gouvernance et mobilisation armée. *Also available in English.*



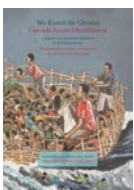
### **Stabilization, Extraversion and Political Settlements in Somalia**

This report analyses the role of international aid and the interplay between local and foreign elites in policies and practices which have frequently undermined state-building efforts in Somalia.



### **Going on Tahrīb: The causes and consequences of Somali youth migration to Europe**

This report examines the causes and consequences of tahrīb, why young people decide to go on tahrīb, and the often serious effects on the families left behind.

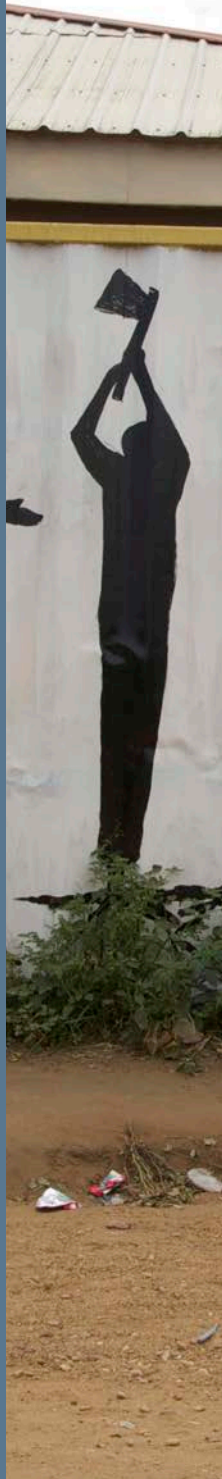


### **Carrada Ayaan Dhunkannay: Waa socdaalkii tahrībka ee Somaliland ilaa badda Medhitereeniyanka**

Sheekadani waa waraysigii ugu horreeyay ee ku saabsan waayo aragnimadii wiil dhalinyaro ah oo reer Somalil- and oo taahriibay. *Also available in English.*

**'WORKING IN THAT FIELD FOR 33 YEARS, I CAN SAY THAT THEY ARE BOTH GOOD AND BAD INSTRUMENTS. THEY CAN MOBILIZE FOR BOTH PEACE OR WAR.'**

With the formation of a Transitional Government of National Unity (TGoNU) and the subsequent outbreak of violence in Juba in July 2016, the role of civil society in South Sudan is more vital than ever. Can a civil society, confident and well resourced, contribute to the political discourse, engage in nation building, hold public institutions to account and improve the transparency of public life? What can civil society do, and what role can it play in the political transition? A panel of academics, activists, the church, chiefs and press discussed the nature of civil society in South Sudan and its past and future place in the public sphere in a series of public lectures at the Catholic University of South Sudan. Over three evenings the panelists and an audience of students, and members of the public and government, focused on specific institutions, including NGOs, churches and customary authorities, with a concluding discussion that explored the relationship between them. The fifth annual Juba Lecture Series were a collaboration between the Catholic University's Institute for Applied Research and Community Outreach and the Rift Valley Institute, supported by the Australian Embassy in Addis Ababa.



Australian Government  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade



Rift Valley Institute  
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