



SOUTH SUDAN FEDERAL DEMOCRATIC ALLIANC(SSFDA)

Chairman and Commander in Chief

Communique – For Immediate Release

From: Samuel Mut Gai, Chairman and Commander in Chief, SSFDA

Date: March 28, 2025

To:

The Governments of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, the Republic of Kenya, the Republic of Uganda, the Republic of Sudan, the Federal Republic of Somalia, the Republic of Djibouti, the State of Eritrea, the Republic of Burundi, the Republic of Rwanda, the United Republic of Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of Congo;
All Officials Representing the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the East African Community (EAC);

Cc:

The African Union (AU), the United Nations (UN), and the Troika (United States, United Kingdom, and Norway)

Subject: Silence Is Not Neutrality – It Is Complicity

Excellencies, Esteemed Regional Leaders, and International Partners,

What do you call a peace agreement where only one side disarms? What do you call diplomacy that cannot name the aggressor? South Sudan is not at a crossroads—it is at a breaking point.

The situation in South Sudan has reached a breaking point. Yet again, calls for "calm" and "dialogue" are made, as if the events unfolding are new, unexpected, or unclear in responsibility. They are not. The root causes are long established. The actors obstructing peace are well known. The cycle of manipulation, delay, and violence is predictable. And now, your silence in the face of grave violations threatens to make you complicit in the unravelling of a fragile peace.

Today, we ask not for sympathy, but for accountability. We appeal not for generic statements, but for courageous diplomacy grounded in truth.

The Facts Cannot Be Ignored:

- **Widespread attacks:** President Salva Kiir's forces are conducting widespread attacks against SPLM-IO positions and against civilians across Unity, Upper Nile, Jonglei, and Equatoria.
- **De Facto House Arrest:** Dr. Riek Machar, First Vice President and opposition leader, is under de facto house arrest. His communications are restricted, his safety under threat.
- **Abduction of Children:** The SSPDF, suffering from low morale and lack of payment, has resorted to forced recruitment—including of boys.
- **Systematic Agreement Violations:** Kiir's government continues to make unilateral appointments and violate the 2018 Revitalized Peace Agreement (R-ARCSS).
- **Foreign Military Incursion:** UPDF troops, in violation of South Sudanese sovereignty and the arms embargo, have entered the country and engaged in combat operations.
- **Authoritarian Repression Infrastructure:** The NSS continues its campaign of enforced disappearances and intimidation of opposition leaders. The National Security Service (NSS), now numbering over 15,000, operates as a de facto presidential militia, with unconstitutional powers of arrest and indefinite detention—outside judicial oversight. This is the infrastructure of repression, not peace.
- **Betrayal of Peace—Again and Again:** The opposition has repeatedly laid down arms in good faith—2013, 2016, and again after the 2018 R-ARCSS—only to be betrayed each time. These betrayals form a clear pattern, not a policy failure but a deliberate strategy of delay, disarmament, and domination. It is not the opposition's willingness that is lacking, but Kiir's commitment to peace.

These are not allegations. These are verified, repeated, and systemic actions that undermine every principle of the peace process you have vowed to protect.

You knew who blocked peace. You knew who bombed civilians. You knew who armed foreign troops. And yet—you said nothing.

You watched. You waited. You wished for calm. But you did not act.

And Yet, What Has Been the Response? We acknowledge the recent **UNMISS** press release, which rightly called out the risk of relapse into full-scale war and condemned unilateral actions that jeopardize the peace. We commend this statement and recognize the limitations of UNMISS' mandate. Nevertheless, its clarity sets an example.

By contrast, the recent joint statement from **EU member states and the Troika** was disturbingly tepid—a hollow expression of "concern" that once again failed to name the aggressor, failed to condemn the violations, and failed to acknowledge the asymmetric nature of this conflict. Generic calls on "all parties" serve only to obscure responsibility and shield the principal perpetrator

Even now, the international community continues to issue calls for "President Kiir and Dr. Machar to make peace," as if both men possess equal agency. This framing not only ignores the asymmetry—it legitimizes it. President Kiir governs with unchecked freedom, directing military operations, foreign policy, and internal repression at will. Dr. Machar, by contrast, remains under severe restrictions, if not outright detention—his communications monitored, his movement curtailed, his safety uncertain. Reports increasingly suggest he may have been transferred to the National Security Service (NSS) headquarters, commonly known as the Blue House—a facility internationally condemned for torture and inhumane treatment.

To **continue presenting these two figures as equal parties** to a dialogue is not diplomacy—it is a distortion that perpetuates impunity – **denial of facts**.

A persistent and fundamental imbalance continues to undermine the credibility of the peace process: President Salva Kiir is afforded full freedom to speak, travel, and act—while Dr. Riek Machar remains constrained in both movement and expression. Since his flight from Juba in 2016 and subsequent enforced stay in South Africa, Dr. Machar has not, at any point, been permitted to operate as a fully autonomous political actor. He is expected to participate in dialogue and uphold agreements, yet is systematically denied the conditions necessary to do so.

This state of affairs has been normalized in successive negotiations, reducing his role to that of a symbolic presence rather than an empowered stakeholder. For any renewed process to be legitimate, this imbalance must be acknowledged and remedied.

Even worse, while the state deploys helicopter gunships against civilians, the **South Sudan Media Authority** speaks not of massacres, but of social media "misuse." We reject these authoritarian tactics aimed at silencing truth and evading accountability. To suggest that online speech is the threat—rather than bombs, bullets, and state-sponsored repression—is an insult to the suffering of the people.

In Nasir, families bury their dead in flooded fields. In Juba, young boys disappear in the night. In Bentiu, grandmothers hide from helicopter gunships. These are not abstractions—they are the lived realities behind your statements of “concern.”

A Nation Held Hostage by a Political Marketplace

South Sudan today is not the failure of its people—it is the failure of a ruling system built to extract from them. For over a decade, a small and isolated elite has held the entire nation hostage, turning government into a marketplace where loyalty is bought, opposition is silenced, and resources are hoarded—not to build a country, but to preserve power.

This political marketplace, presided over by President Kiir, has reduced governance to transactional survival. It divides communities, rewards coercion, and punishes unity. And despite years in power and billions in revenue, this system has produced no measurable benefit for the people of South Sudan—only deepening poverty, state collapse, broken institutions, and a population of 12 million paying the price for the ambitions of a few.

The crisis is not tribal. It is not cultural. It is systemic. And every South Sudanese—regardless of tribe or region—has suffered under it.

True peace cannot emerge from a system built to obstruct it.

We echo the courageous words of Dr. Deng Bol Aruai Bol: If you cannot name who is obstructing peace, then you are no longer peace guarantors. If you cannot condemn the presence of foreign troops killing South Sudanese civilians, then you are no longer credible mediators.

We ask you directly:

- To **Uganda**: On what legal or moral basis do your forces operate in South Sudan? How many more civilians must die before you are called to account?
- To **Ethiopia and Kenya**: As lead sponsors of the 2018 agreement, how do you justify silence while it is dismantled clause by clause?
- To **IGAD and EAC**: What actions will you take beyond statements? Are your roles as guarantors merely ceremonial?

The Regional Imperative

We remind all actors: "The effectiveness of external pressure tends to diminish with increasing distance from the context in which it is applied. Conversely, pressure originating from regional actors—who are more attuned to local dynamics and interests—is often exponentially more impactful."

You, the regional bodies and neighbors, are the only actors with the proximity and legitimacy to change the trajectory. Your inaction emboldens the aggressor. Your silence costs lives.

This is no longer a matter of mediation—it is a matter of moral and regional responsibility.

We therefore demand the following immediate steps:

1. A formal IGAD and EAC condemnation of the detention and silencing of Dr. Riek Machar.
2. An emergency IGAD summit to review and enforce compliance with the R-ARCSS.
3. An independent investigation into UPDF involvement and its legal basis. An unconditional withdrawal of Ugandan military resources from South Sudan.
4. Public identification of parties violating the peace agreement.
5. Support for a federal governance framework grounded in local autonomy and dignity for all 64 Nations of South Sudan.

While children flee forced recruitment in Juba, the government says it seeks dialogue. While helicopter gunships level villages, the Media Authority warns against inflammatory tweets. While Machar is silenced, the world asks him to speak for peace.

Secure comms available upon request.

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History will not be written by the number of communiqués you issue. It will be judged by your courage to speak and act when it mattered most.

We, the peoples of South Sudan, will not remain silent. Neither should you.

For further information or press inquiries, please contact:

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