



E-BULLETIN #245

06-Nov-16

"Let the holiness of God shine forth" (cf. Mt 5, 16)

item 461

**ONE NATION:
Sudan Catholic Bishop's Conference Statement**

Take every care to preserve the unity of the Spirit by the peace that binds you together. (Ephesians 4:3)

We, the Catholic bishops of the Republic of South Sudan, meeting in Plenary Session in Juba from 6th – 8th September 2011, wish to express our joy and thanksgiving to God for the peaceful birth of our new nation on 9th July 2011.

The challenge for all of us now is nation-building, emphasising unity and integration.

As we said in our season of prayer for independence, South Sudan must be "one nation from every tribe, tongue and people".

This is a shared responsibility, not just for the government. We encourage all citizens of South Sudan, with their faith communities, civil society and political parties, to participate in building a new, prosperous and peaceful nation. We encourage a culture of hard work rather than entitlement or dependency. We commit ourselves and our Church to continue to play a proactive and prophetic role in public life, insisting on human rights and responsibilities, and the dignity of the individual, as expressed in the gospel values of Catholic Social Teaching.

A crucial part of nation-building is national reconciliation. Five decades of war has left the scars of trauma on our people, and new internal conflicts are taking place even as we meet. We are particularly concerned about the recent great loss of life in Jonglei State, as well as the ongoing conflicts elsewhere, including the Lord's Resistance Army in Western Equatoria and Western Bahr el Ghazal. We urge all those with grievances to settle them by peaceful means, not by taking up arms again. Violence is not the answer. We call upon all stakeholders in South Sudan to work for peace and reconciliation. We re-commit ourselves and our Church to the continual process of national reconciliation, at every level.

By its very nature, the Church contributes to the integral well-being of the people. Our Sudan Catholic Radio Network (with radio stations reaching the whole nation) and our Catholic universities play a very visible role in nation-building and reconciliation. However this work is ongoing at every level of our Church life through diocesan institutions such as schools, clinics, justice and peace commissions, aid and development activities, and our spiritual and pastoral ministry, which seeks to form people as good citizens and good Christians. In addition, in October 2011 we will hold a national symposium on the role of the Church in building a new nation, followed by cultural events nation-wide.

We welcome the formation of a new government in South Sudan. We are encouraged by attempts to broaden geographical and gender representation within the cabinet. We have great expectations of this new government, and commit ourselves to engaging constructively with them. We call upon government and citizens to ensure that corruption disappears at all levels of national life. At the same time, we recognise that “Rome was not built in a day” and that the development of a new nation is a process which will take time. While constantly holding the government to account and always expecting progress, we nevertheless caution citizens to manage their expectations, to be patient in their demands, to be fair to the government and to allow them time to move forward carefully and in good order.

We note with concern the slow delivery of basic services and infrastructure, increasing crime and insecurity, and the rising price of essential commodities which are causing difficulties in South Sudan. We call for a nation-wide effort to address these issues.

Our joy is tempered by the tragic events taking place in Darfur, Abyei, South Kordofan / Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile. Injustice and insecurity in the border areas impinges negatively on peace in our country and our region. Our hearts are also troubled by concerns about the treatment of South Sudanese and other minorities in the Republic of Sudan. Their pain is our pain. We offer them our prayers and solidarity. We support all those in the two Sudans and the international community who are seeking a just and peaceful solution.

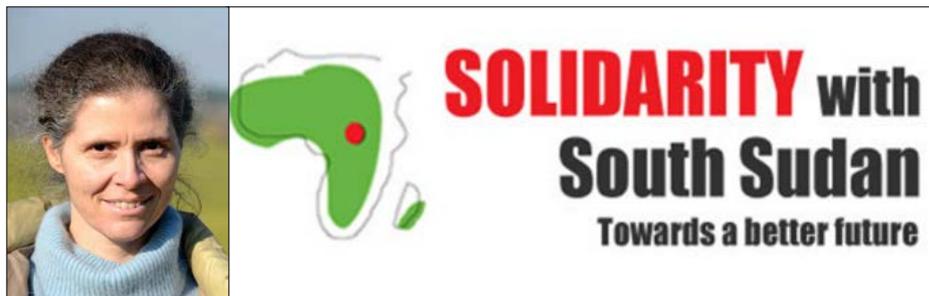
Through the intercession of Saints Josephine Bakhita and Daniel Comboni, may God bless you all. God bless our new Republic of South Sudan, and our neighbour, the Republic of Sudan.

Juba, Republic of South Sudan
8th September 2011
Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

item 462

Solidarity with South Sudan: Pallottine participation

Solidarity with South Sudan is a UISG/USG (Union of Superiors General, both female and male) sponsored collaborative venture of more than 170 religious congregations who have united their charisms, finances and personnel in response to the invitation of the Sudan Catholic Bishops’ Conference to rebuild the Church and society in South Sudan following more than five decades of civil war.



This is a KAIROS moment for the country. Decades of civil war have seriously hampered its development. It is an opportunity to help build a new nation in collaboration with the local church and the people of South Sudan.

The SAC General Council made a one-time substantial contribution to this worthy project. It was followed by another generous donation from the *Immaculate Conception* Province [USA]. The amounts were used mainly for the education and care of needy children and for the preparation of teachers for schools. The needs are still plenty as the hapless population, caught between unending armed conflicts, continues to suffer.

The following segments of an interview with **Sr Judith Pereira Rico** [above - Religious of Jesus and Mary from Spain] provide a realistic picture of the situation:

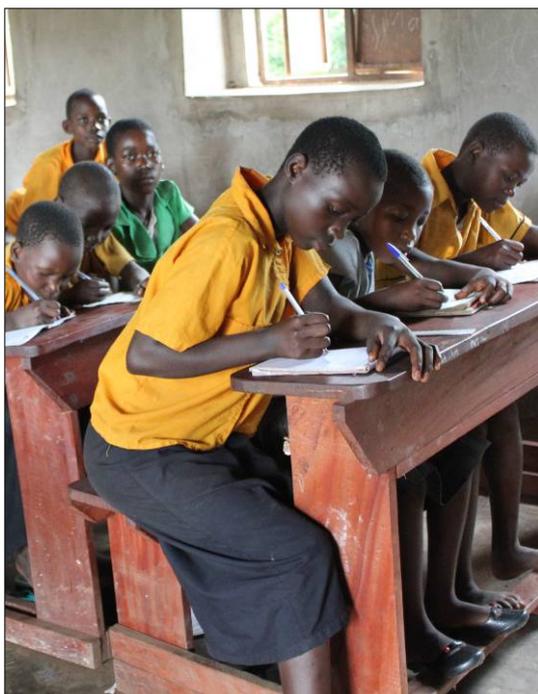


What were your impressions of the situation, and why did you leave?

The conflict in Juba seems to be well coordinated, with the leaders of both factions calling on their own military followers. Army members, and government employees, have not received their salaries regularly. So this, along with huge inflation and insecurity, worsens the military and political conflict. The ethnicity component seems to become more and more strong and the current ceasefire may well be followed by more conflict. The risk of reproducing a clash like Rwanda-Burundi is very real. South Sudan was formed before the people had a consciousness of being one people. The tribal mentality prevails.

My working base is Rome and from there I visit our communities and projects in South Sudan twice a year. I was just finishing my last visit when we were trapped by the conflict in Juba. Our organisation tried to evacuate all visitors. But our communities remain, and our projects are still active!

What do people outside South Sudan need to know about the situation? Is there a key factor that is maybe missing in media coverage?



- the extreme poverty of the people after years of war, with a prevailing tribal mentality that sees other tribes as enemies, and prevents them being ready to unite as one people
- the commercial side of selling weapons to them by many countries that also want to help in the peace process – a massive contradiction on the part of the international community
- Sudan meanwhile profits from fees for transporting oil
- weapons proliferate, in every family – so everybody has had casualties in conflicts and justice is never done – then, because of the lack of justice, revenge prevails
- people and leaders are now traumatised by so many years of war
- the difficult role of women who bear responsibility for their families – suffering as targets in war but also the ones most interested in peace, education and health for their own families



What is the role of the church and sisters in particular in the ongoing process to create peace, stability and justice in South Sudan?

The church itself, often together with other churches, sends continuous messages to denounce violence and call for unity, dialogue and peace. Local churches have power in communities.

Simultaneously it provides assistance to those displaced as well as schooling and health care through numerous different institutions, many of them owned by sisters. Sisters in South Sudan administer institutions and programs that take care directly of people – in education, health, women’s empowerment, agriculture, peace building and trauma healing. Religious in the country witness unity just by the fact that so many of them are foreigners themselves and thus diverse. They witness unconditional service and love for the most vulnerable, even risking their own lives and integrity. They give hope to people and reveal the dignity of every person.



Trust this article and the photos on South Sudan will inspire us more and more to reach out to the most needy people around the world.

The *Holy Year of Mercy* has made us more sensitive to the spiritual and corporal acts of mercy which are visible and authentic expressions of our love for God.

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