

Civil Society in South Sudan Advocacy Priorities and Principles 2017 – 2020

Toward sustainable peace and development in South Sudan

Compiled by Civil Society of South Sudan
Angelina Daniel Seeka, End Impunity Organization
Betty Sunday, Women Monthly Forum on the Peace Process
Beny Gideon Mabor, Independent Advocate
Kizito Sagala, Independent expert
Linda Ferdinand Hussein, Women Training and Promotion Association
Nathaniel Mayom, Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa
Nyagoah Priscilla Tut, Independent expert
Amanya Joseph, Human Rights Development Organisation

With the technical support of the Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa (SIHA Network) and civil society consultations facilitated by Dr. Guma Komey, Dr. Leben Moro.

FOREWORD

In South Sudan, the humanitarian situation continues to steadily decline and the space for non-state actors to deliver humanitarian aid and protection services, has become increasingly restricted. Civil society has been left uncoordinated to advocate against human rights violations, with no organized agenda and limited ability to weigh in on the peace building process. Recognizing the need for more cohesion and coordination among civil society in South Sudan, the Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa (SIHA Network), with the support of the Open Society Initiative for East Africa, convened **the South Sudan Civil Society Forum** in Entebbe, Uganda from 6-8 March 2017. In an effort to prioritize the inclusivity of civil society actors across the civil society realm of South Sudan, the forum brought together 22 actors representing community-based organizations (CBOs), faith-based organizations (FBOs), national organizations, and regional organizations focused on women's rights, humanitarian response, youth leadership, justice and rule of law. The forum provided a safe platform for civil society actors present to discuss and deliberate over key national advocacy priorities and strategies. Through this initiative, SIHA Network intended to contribute towards coordinating South Sudan civil society actors to develop a common agenda and advocacy strategy on governance, peace-building and human rights, rising above ethnic and political divisions. The participating civil society members (herein called civil society) developed this joint advocacy framework highlighting their collective advocacy priorities and proposed methods of engagement towards achieving and sustaining peace and development in South Sudan. This advocacy framework can be used by local, national, and international civil society to coordinate advocacy efforts for South Sudan and exert collective influence, and should also be used by donors to inform funding priorities.

Towards sustainable peace and development in South Sudan

Since the outbreak of conflict in December 2013, the people of South Sudan have not recovered from the untold suffering. Properties have been destroyed, women and girls have been raped, and thousands have been forced out of their homes, with many moving to neighboring countries. Despite the signing of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (ARCSS) in 2015, the conflict has continued to escalate and more than 2.3 million people have been displaced. For the new country of South Sudan, which is heavily involved in peacebuilding and state-building processes, the importance of civil society organizations (CSOs) cannot be overemphasized.¹ According to the South Sudan NGO Forum,² CSOs have played a significant role in South Sudan's peace and state building journey, both in pre and post-Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) period. There are over 100 national organizations registered with the South Sudan NGO Forum, and there are an estimated several hundred other community-based organizations (CBOs), faith-based organizations (FBOs) and civil society groups. There is proven opportunity for civil society in South Sudan to take collective position and action to positively engage in restoring social peace, and this framework outlines civil society's priorities and strategies for the coming three years. This framework is a starting point for collaborative engagement intended to contribute to sustainable peace in South Sudan.

¹ Moro, L. (2 December 2015). CSOs/CBOs and faith-based organizations-led peace and reconciliation efforts. The Sudd Institute.

²The South Sudan NGO Forum is an independent coordinating body of national and international NGOs that serves and facilitates the work of its members to address the humanitarian and development needs in South Sudan. All member organizations agree to provide humanitarian and/or development assistance to the South Sudanese people regardless of ethnic background, political affiliation, or religious belief. (<http://southsudanngoforum.org/>)

ADVOCACY PRIORITIES

1. **National Dialogue:** Civil society emphasizes the need for a National Dialogue process guided by the principles of inclusivity, transparency, and participation, led by a neutral party, and built on grassroots consultation with all citizens.

The National Dialogue is an opportunity to restore peace, build trust, and rebuild the broken social fabric in South Sudan. It provides an opening for the civilian population to express their grievances and address the root causes of ongoing conflict. To date, however, there is limited knowledge of the National Dialogue process at the grassroots, and there is a need for immediate country-wide civic education to alert and prepare all citizens, including women and youth, to actively and effectively engage. The success of the National Dialogue is fully dependent on political will, and civil society calls on the Transitional Government of National Unity (TGoNU) to create a safe environment conducive to dialogue so that people can converse freely without fear or favor.

Civil society proposes the National Dialogue follow two separate yet closely related tracks: a political track, in which political parties engage in an inclusive National Dialogue; and a social track that engages all non-state actors on national issues of common interest and concern. Both tracks should follow a bottom-up approach. The social track is expected to be led by civil society at their different organizational levels, and can be conducted in the following three steps. Firstly, support civil society organizations to conduct consultation with citizens throughout the country to collect their views on how the National Dialogue, as well as inter and intra-tribal community dialogue at the grassroots, should be conducted. Secondly, convene regional peace conferences in the three greater regions of South Sudan to facilitate an open and frank discussion amongst communities from different ethnicities on the issues that were raised in the grassroots consultations. Finally, convene a National Dialogue Conference either within or outside South Sudan. The National Dialogue should explore national values and identity with a view toward addressing root causes of conflict and building sustainable peace. It should address both the political and social issues affecting the country, including the poor socio-economic situation and rampant instability, as well as governance structures and national vision. The outcomes of the social track shall be taken into consideration by state actors in the political track at community, regional and national levels.

Regarding the National Dialogue:

- Civil society emphasizes inclusive participation from South Sudanese citizens within and outside the country in the National Dialogue and in inter- and intra-tribal dialogues: urban and rural, religious leaders, traditional authorities, armed groups, and political parties.
- To promote a safe environment in which people can converse freely, civil society highlights the need for a neutral party to chair the National Dialogue and appeals to President Kiir to step down and give this position to impartial religious leaders.
- Civil society underscores the need for sufficient resources to enable an inclusive, transparent, and participatory National Dialogue from TGoNU and the international community. Resources should be managed by an independent financial firm. The National Dialogue should not interfere with the 2015 Peace Agreement in spirit and in letter, and should be carried out concurrently with the transitional period of the Peace Agreement.
- Civil society emphasizes a commitment to the implementation of genuine National Dialogue, and to commitment to the resolutions of the National Dialogue.

2. Constitution-making process: Civil society emphasizes a pro-people constitution-making process leading not only to free, fair, and transparent elections but also to state-building and national integration, and therefore to enduring peace, democracy, economic prosperity and political stability.

All citizens should be mobilized to participate in the constitution-making process through a civil society led, South Sudan wide process. This includes women and men as well as youth. The process should promote education, transparent sharing of information, and facilitate a coordinated advocacy process for a pro-people constitution. This is premised on the conviction that the process of constitution-making is equally as important as the final substance and it is therefore necessary that the people are included in this process. Like the National Dialogue, the constitutional-making process has to be inclusive, participatory, and transparent. The capacity of civil society organizations should be leveraged to engage with communities, collect and collate their views, and transmit their recommendations to the relevant body. The election is a key component of any democratic process. However, with the current conflict it will be very difficult to conduct free, fair and transparent elections.

Regarding the constitution-making process:

- Civil society emphasizes the role and activities of the National Constitutional Review Commission (NCRC) to enable them to receive submissions widely from stakeholders in the development of the permanent constitution.
- Civil society urges the TGoNU to facilitate the National Constitutional Amendment Committee (NCAC) and incorporate the 2015 Peace Agreement into the constitution.
- Civil society emphasizes implementation of Peace Agreement provisions on permanent constitutional making process that shall lead to general elections after the completion of the transitional period. Civil society should be engaged in conducting civic education to masses on the election procedures.
- Civil society should work on educating the people of South Sudan on their rights and provide them with civic education trainings in order to build the capacity of citizens to identify suitable leaders. Leaders who have vision for peace, development, security and system on government institutions, not because he or she has money to pay for it.

3. 2015 ARCSS: Civil society emphasizes resuscitation of the Peace Agreement and a complete and genuine ceasefire by all armed actors.

If implemented with good spirit and political will, the eight chapters of the Peace Agreement provide a framework and opportunity for institutional reform in South Sudan. Civil society should be included and engaged in security sector reform, judicial reform and rule of law, governance reforms, constitutional reforms, electoral law reforms and accountability for the victims that have suffered during the course of the conflict. This will include protection of women and girls, improving economic situation, inclusivity and participation of women and enhancing cultural and social cohesion.

Regarding the Peace Agreement:

- Civil society calls for implementation of the Peace Agreement in letter and spirit, beginning with an immediate declaration and implementation of complete ceasefire. The Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangement Monitoring Mechanism (CTSAMM) should fulfill its mandate to help bring an end to the conflict and its devastating consequences: great loss of life, the displacement of millions of people and destruction of property and livelihoods, with support from the Joint Military Ceasefire Commission (JMCC).
- Civil society urges the establishment of a hybrid court commission for South Sudan to contribute to judicial reform and judicial neutrality.
- Civil society urges all security sectors to ensure small arms control and design an effective strategy/mechanism to conduct countrywide disarmament of communities.

4. Human security: Civil society emphasizes the government's responsibility to provide basic services to citizens, particularly in response to poverty, hunger, diseases, drought, and floods.

Service delivery is an important component of human development. However there is a total disconnect of service delivery by government to the civil population. This is evidenced by the declaration of famine in some parts of South Sudan. In-order to alleviate the suffering, poverty, hunger and diseases, and to enhance basic service delivery, there is need for comprehensive implementation of the Peace Agreement and the National Dialogue as outlined above, given that the current conflict has contributed to economic collapse and high prices in the market. This requires the government to contribute resources for the reconstruction of war-affected areas and to ensure comprehensive ceasefire so that communities are able to return to their homes and cultivate. Civil society can play a role in empowering citizens economically.

According to April 2016 research³, the potential contribution of national and local NGOs to the humanitarian response in South Sudan has not been realized as the structures, norms, and processes of the system in South Sudan remain internationally led and often hinder the participation of national actors despite their comparative advantages.

Regarding human security:

- Civil society underlines the need for unrestricted humanitarian corridors to war-affected areas. TGoNU should ensure implementation of conflict-sensitive economic reforms as envisioned by Chapter IV of the Peace Agreement.
- Civil society calls for a comprehensive review of the role of the international and regional community in South Sudan, including a study analyzing funding mechanisms, spending, and accountability, and how much goes to beneficiaries. We appeal to the international and regional community to recognize the importance of the national civil society and institution-building in efforts toward sustainable peace, including humanitarian intervention, and to enact a new approach to build the state of South Sudan.
- Civil society calls on donors, national authorities, and international NGOs to review funding and coordination mechanisms that disincentivize engagement of national civil society.

³ Tanner, L. & Moro, L. (April 2016). Missed out: The role of local actors in the humanitarian response in the South Sudan conflict. CAFOD and Trócaire in Partnership, Christian Aid, Oxfam GB, and Tear fund

- We call on civil society in South Sudan for agreement rather than division in support of alleviating hunger and poverty and providing services to all citizens. Let us have inclusive ethnic, religious, and political representation within civil society.

5. Protection of women and girls from all forms of violence and increased participation of women in decision-making and peace-building

Civil society emphasizes implementation of national and international agreements on protection from all forms of violence against women and girls. Civil society urges compliance with the 25% quota system and affirmative action women representation mechanisms to ensure women's participation in the National Dialogue.

In the South Sudanese context of prolonged war and militarization, the transformation of gender norms and the normalization of violence have translated into increasing levels of sexual violence against women and girls. Since the conflict started, gender inequalities have been violently exacerbated⁴; the number of reported cases of gender-based violence increased five-fold in the two years up to December 2015.⁵ Women and girl survivors of rape and gender-based violence should have access to justice.

The patriarchal culture combined with high illiteracy rates among women especially in rural areas contribute to women's lack of decision-making power. Members of civil society represented at the South Sudan Civil Society Forum appeal to women and to women's civil society organizations, to come together under the one flag of South Sudan in national solidarity. Emphasis pointed towards civil society forgetting their differences and coming together to discuss and address the issues facing the women of South Sudan. There is a need for women's organizations to network with women in camps, as well as with diaspora in Kenya and Uganda to raise awareness about women's rights.

Regarding violence against women and women's participation:

- Civil society emphasizes accountability for perpetrators of sexual and gender-based violence crimes at the community and national levels and the implementation of the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).
- Civil society calls for women in rural and urban areas to be effectively and actively involved in the National Dialogue.
- Civil society urges implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 to increase participation of women in security efforts,
- Civil society calls for compliance in letter and in spirit with the 25% women's quota in the national parliament and emphasis on quality representation as opposed to merely filling the quota obligations.
- Civil society calls for implementation of the National Action plans and national solidarity amongst women's civil society organizations.

⁴ Tanner, L. & Moro, L. (April 2016). Missed out: The role of local actors in the humanitarian response in the South Sudan conflict. CAFOD and Trócaire in Partnership, Christian Aid, Oxfam GB, and Tearfund.

⁵OCHA (1 December 2015). South Sudan Humanitarian Bulletin. <http://reliefweb.int/report/south-sudan/south-sudan-humanitarian-bulletin-1-december-2015>

5. Trauma and healing: Civil society emphasizes nation-wide comprehensive trauma healing led by South Sudanese and supported by religious institutions and relevant regional and international institutions.

The recent conflict has left many communities, citizens and individuals highly traumatized due to the losses experienced in lives, hunger, displacement, living in camps, witnessing and experiencing violence, poverty, being unable to send children to school, and the uncertain future. South Sudanese require a holistic trauma and healing processes. However, there are limited organizations and professional personnel who are providing psychosocial support. Civil society organizations should be equipped to conduct reconciliatory activities within communities and provide psychosocial support. The CSOs should be supported to design activities tailored to rebuilding social cohesion and confidence-building, using techniques including sports, drama, psychosocial support, rehabilitation centers, and financial support.

In support of the above, research should be undertaken on South Sudanese approaches to trauma healing so that issues are addressed from a South Sudanese approach. Provide 'healing the healers' training for national NGOs, CSOs, CBOs, and FBOs so that South Sudanese are leading trauma healing efforts.

Regarding trauma and healing:

- Civil society appeals to the international community and the churches to assist and fund the process of trauma healing.
- Donors and government who support recovery and resilience programs should do so in consultation with grassroots people. Research has shown that a lack of funding for recovery and resilience programs in South Sudan limited opportunities to help communities rebuild their coping mechanisms.¹
- Civil society emphasizes implementation of Chapter V of the Peace Agreement on transitional justice, accountability, reconciliation, and healing. We ask the TGoNU to immediately develop enabling legislation to implement the establishment of the Commission for Truth, Reconciliation, and Healing.
- Trauma healing should be incorporated into the National Dialogue process at all levels.
- Civil society asks donors to support research on South Sudanese approaches to trauma healing so that nation-wide efforts toward trauma healing are evidence-based.
- Civil society appeals to individuals and families to set aside their anger and to keep our children from being haunted by vicarious trauma.
- Establishment of a healing centre which will include survivors of SGBV.

ACTORS

Stakeholders at the community level, the national level, and the regional and international levels must be engaged toward peace and sustainable development in South Sudan. In support of the advocacy priorities above, civil society calls on the people of South Sudan, civil society, churches and mosques, the TGoNU, neighboring countries, donors, and the international community to actively engage in peace-building in South Sudan.

In support of an inclusive and participatory National Dialogue, a pro-people constitution-making process, the resuscitation of the Peace Agreement, provision of basic human security to citizens, protection of women and girls from all forms of violence and increased participation of women in decision-making and peace-building, and nationwide trauma healing, civil society calls for action from the following groups:

At the *community level*, civil society is calling upon the citizens of South Sudan inside and outside the country; upon women and children and communities; upon displaced communities and vulnerable groups, including people with disabilities; upon traditional groups and authorities; warring parties, political parties, and other armed groups; community-based organizations and grassroots civil society; and upon churches and religious organizations.

At the *national level*, civil society is calling upon the Transitional Government of National Unity; women's and youth groups; the National Alliance, National Agenda, and other political parties; the business community; armed opposition groups; and national CSOs, FBOs, and CBOs.

At the *regional level*, civil society is calling upon the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), especially Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, and Sudan; the African Commission (AU) and AU Special Envoy to South Sudan; the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR); the East African Community (EAC); United Nations agencies, the Office of the UN Secretary General, and the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS); and the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JMEC).

PROPOSED METHODS OF ENGAGEMENT

Civil society will use the following five strategies and processes to contribute to the implementation of advocacy priorities identified above. Key activities are outlined for each strategy.

1. Strengthen NETWORKS with like-minded organizations that can work together practically in pursuit of the common goal of sustainable peace and development in South Sudan.

Key activities

- Continue to develop and join networking platforms, such as the Women Monthly Forum, at the community, national, and regional levels.
- Engage with churches, mosques, and faith-based organizations locally and nationally.
- Shared leadership of networks rather than networks being owned by a single organization.
- Connect with regional and international networks and forums to see how organizations can support each other, such as the Regional Women Movement Forum.
- Issue joint policy statements.
- Pursue joint funding opportunities that build on different organizations' strengths.
- Identify funding from international donors for best-practice learning trips to learn how civil society in similar contexts network.
- Use practical strategies for informal connection, such as informing like-minded organizations of activities and plans, inviting them to get involved in events and activities, and adding them to mailing lists.

2. Use evidence-based ADVOCACY to influence national, regional and international stakeholders and decision-makers.

Key activities

- Issue statements jointly as civil society signed by multiple organizations and networks.
- Undertake and disseminate evidence-based research and documentation, and use evidence to defend advocacy positions and inform statements.
- Issue formal letters with recommendations.
- Identify platforms to conduct briefings, such as public forums and lectures.
- Use media to extend influence without inciting violence and/or taking sides.
- Establish relationships between women parliamentarians and women's organizations in South Sudan.

- Strategically create space to engage members of the government in dialogue on issues related to peace-building, speaking on behalf of those who are marginalized to those who have power.

3. Build the **CAPACITY** of civil society and state actors to invest in peace

Key activities

- Strive for inclusive ethnic, religious, and political representation within civil society organizations.
- Accept responsibility for atrocities and stop apportioning blame to others; support the government to develop a larger strategy on acceptance of responsibility.
- Build capacity of civil servants and army personnel.
- Train security services on human rights and international law instruments, as well as implementation of Chapter II of the Peace Agreement.
- Review national legislation on the security sector to ensure it is complementary to international human rights instruments.
- Hold the judiciary accountable for separation of powers as envisioned in the Peace Agreement.
- Bring both women and men to the table.

4. Influence **FUNDRAISING** efforts for sustainable peace and development in South Sudan.

Key activities

- Apply for collective funding as civil society networks or partners for certain projects.
- Advocate for donors and UN agencies to provide a minimum percentage of humanitarian funding directly to national organizations.

5. Influence communities to live in peace and **REBUILD TRUST**.

Key activities

- Conduct trauma healing training workshops (TOT)
- Conduct peace building and building trust activities within the communities (neighborhood co-existence)

- Organize monthly community-based meetings and forums
- Focus on increasing girls' access to education to fight the illiteracy rates
- Organize human rights training, especially on the impacts of SGBV in communities and how it can be addressed
- Engage men on advocating for women's issues
- Focus on the economic empowerment including the need to create an environment for job creation
- Design interventions to strengthen families as one of the most important institutions in society.
- Design interventions to address the cultural imbalance that hinders women's rights and participation.

6. The participating civil society in the March 2017 South Sudan Civil Society Forum should propose a joint plan of action on how to realize the above priorities, and liaise with relevant donors to support them in implementing the proposed plan of action. Annual meetings were suggested in order to evaluate progress towards realizing the above-listed priorities and issues of common interest.