

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Khartoum/Kampala Mediation Fails People of South Sudan - Seeks to Appease Perpetrators of the Conflict.

UPDM is dismayed at this latest failed effort by the Heads of State of Ethiopia, Sudan, Uganda and Kenya, to bring a political settlement to war-torn South Sudan, characterised by incapacity and conflict of interest at the expense of the people of South Sudan. It is deeply concerning that while these Heads of State talk about bringing an end to the long suffering of the people, their actions seek to empower the perpetrators of the conflict who continue to commit crimes against innocent, vulnerable civilians. While we applaud the mediation efforts IGAD has made since 2013, it is evident that their mediation approach that primarily focuses on the needs of the perpetrators rather than the people, will not bring the needed peace and stability in the troubled country.

Noting with disappointment that this latest mediation by the Heads of State of the four countries is a departure from the HLRF/ARCSS agreement, UPDM further notes that it does not attempt to deter the ongoing crimes against humanity by the military-backed leaders that have led to hundreds of thousands of deaths, displaced hundreds of thousands more internally and over 2.5 million externally, as refugees, since the beginning of the conflict in 2013. Instead, it is deliberately mute on trust-building measures that address the structural causes of the conflict and justice for the victims

Baffled by the security arrangement agreement out of Khartoum that is exceptionally scanty on details and leaves room for misinterpretation and misunderstanding, it remains unclear how it relates to the HLRF/ARCSS chapter II (on transitional security arrangements); how the mentioned reforms will be funded, implemented and monitored; and how it will translate to the urgent and crucial security reforms necessary for establishing peace stability and democracy in the new country.

UPDM regrets the fact that the oil deal announced between Sudan and South Sudan, allows the former to provide security around designated oil facilities, despite previous controversies around Sudan's alleged stealing of South Sudan oil. Worse still, this poorly negotiated oil deal with Sudan is not only signed off with the TGONU, whose tenure is coming to an end in a couple of weeks but with a key mediator, making their involvement in the mediation process significantly compromised.

The Entebbe power-sharing arrangement ignores the structural cause of the conflict, limited resources for reforms and the rights and protection of civilians, seeking instead to focus exclusively on appeasing the 'strong men' and accommodating the other parties within an over bloated governance structure the makes no sense to resolving the crises and delivering on reforms. This is another clear indication that the mediators do not have the interest of the South Sudanese people in this mediation process, and the resulting agreements, if signed, will only serve to exclude, polarise and deepen the mistrust among communities, putting South Sudan back on the path to conflict and collapse.

UPDM therefore strongly calls on the people of South Sudan and friends of South Sudan to reject this increasingly compromised agreement, if signed. At this stage in our country where border disputes with some of the mediating countries remain unresolved, engaging the same countries to partake in providing security within our borders or advising on security reforms in South Sudan is a treacherous affair that undermines our sovereignty and ability to protect our borders.

UPDM call's on the HLRF stakeholders, namely the AU and TROIKA, to take control of the process under the leadership of the African Union, with a renewed focus on addressing the structural causes of the crisis in a manner that empowers the people and reinstates their rights, freedoms and protection; understanding that the current compromised position we are being thrust in cannot continue. UPDM recommends the following:

- Return to the High-Level Revitalisation Forum (HLRF), under the leadership of the African Union Peace and Security Secretariat with the support of the African Union High-Level Ad Hoc Committee and friends of South Sudan.
- Exclude both Salva Kiir and Riek Machar from the transitional arrangement, understanding that security reforms, in particular, will not be possible with the two in power given the deep mistrust between them. Instead, focus more on a transitional team of technocrats with technical rather than political titles and structures of governance, headed by a ceremonial presidency, with politicians assuming a more monitoring role within parliament.
- Strongly demonstrate zero tolerance and streamline swift punitive measures against violators of the current ceasefire agreement and ongoing crimes against innocent civilians in the interest of empowering and protecting the people.
- Equally important is reviewing and availing the funding for security reforms and reaching out to all armed groups in the country, including those not represented at the negotiating table, to be involved in the security arrangement in particular.
- In light of the recent UN report on the continued brutal and violent attacks on civilians in the country, set up the promised AU led Hybrid court to bring an end to impunity for crimes against humanity, primarily targeted at leaders.

While the recently imposed arms embargo by the UN Security Council resolution is a most welcome action, it does not stop the ongoing violence by the same leaders immediately, and so we call on the international community to look at other protection measures with immediate effects to reinstate the belief that the world cares about the vulnerable victims.

Signed



For UPDM

External Affairs and Communications

Note:

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