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Press

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ASSAD CONDEMNS THE REBELS for attacking Anyuak villages in Akobo.

Anyuak of South Sudan Association in Diaspora (ASSAD) condemns in the strongest terms possible the attacks of unarmed Anyuak civilians in Anyuak villages in Akobo between the 19, 20 and 21 February 2014. ASSAD has been attentively monitoring the conflict between the rebels and the government since it started in December 2013.

We watch with great despair and sadness as South Sudan wages war against itself. What started as a political struggle between the government and the rebels has quickly taken on ethnic dimensions. However for the Anyuak people this has been a daily experience since the occupation by Lou Nuer of Anyuak land. The Anyuak, one of the most oppressed ethnic groups in South Sudan, has for decades suffered in silence ethnic cleansing, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The Anyuak live primarily in Eastern Jonglei State, South Sudan bordering Ethiopia. In South Sudan the Anyuak inhabit the two counties of Pochalla and Akobo with smaller communities scattered in Upper Nile State Nasser County (Nyum Omel). The Anyuak ethnic group is also divided by an artificial border between Ethiopia and South Sudan. In fact, the vast majority of Anyuaks now live in Ethiopia, in part due to the ongoing violence and instability faced by those living in South Sudan. The Anyuaks are peaceful people who abide by both traditional laws administered by the Kingdom and Chiefdoms systems and modern government laws and order. The Anyuak people have been described by anthropologists as skillful in settling disputes through consensus without resorting to violence.

However despite being law abiding citizens, the Anyuak people continue to suffer fatal attacks committed almost exclusively by the Lou Nuer, with the latest attacks on Dimma and Old Akobo villages in Akobo County on October 03, 2013. This attack tragically resulted in the death of Paramount Chief of Akobo Anyuak clan, Chol Odiew Omot and other civilians.

While decades old ethnic cleansing continues, the current South Sudan conflict has further worsened conditions for the Anyuak people. Supportive observers and the International Community must recognize that the rebels and its tribal militia are actively exploiting the current conflict to escalate the

annihilation of the Anyuak people.

Under the guise of fighting the government, the rebel group of heavily armed, mostly Nuer men, are targeting minority ethnic groups and perpetrating inconceivably savage crimes. Consequently, the Anyuaks have lost many lives, while others are displaced and unaccounted for. The threat of violence from Nuer continues even as many flee to Ethiopia, contributing to instability there.

ASSAD requests the government to fulfill its promise and commitment to the people of South Sudan and find a permanent solution to end the violence in Jonglei state. The solution proposed to the government is to divide Jonglei into two states to improve the security of the entire group of minority ethnic communities-- the Anyuaks, Murle, Kachipo, and Jie.

ASSAD calls upon the government and the international community to condemn in the greatest terms possible Lou Nuer attacks on Anyuak people and Anyuak villages. Furthermore, we ask the South Sudan Government to swiftly intervene to ensure Lou Nuer immediately leave Anyuak territories, and re-establish the boundaries or borders between the two communities as they stood in 1956.

We urge the rebel leader Mr. Riak Machar and his army to respect human rights and to stop targeting minority ethnic groups in South Sudan including the Anyuaks. According to recent NGO and UN reports the rebels are becoming more heartless, they are systematically targeting and killing minority groups in South Sudan.

We urgently ask for immediate government protection of Anyuak communities.

ASSAD also requests the United Nations, African Union, European Community, United Kingdom the United States of America, and the Regional Inter-governmental Authority and Development in Africa, and the international community in general to intervene to end this reckless bloodbath. Further we urge the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission to act in accord with its mandate to protect civilians and prevent violence in all of its forms in South Sudan.

Finally, we applaud the peace efforts of the international community who continue to provide humanitarian assistance to internally displaced people. We thank neighbouring countries for welcoming South Sudanese who are fleeing war. We urge UNMISS and the International Community to investigate the killings of innocent civilians that occurred in Akobo, Malakal Juba, Bor and other parts of South Sudan and to report the perpetrators to the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Anyuak of South Sudan (ASSAD) is a non-profit organization that advocates for Anyuak people worldwide and also supports unity, human rights and democracy in South Sudan.

Sincerely,

Dr Joseph Agolory

President
ASSAD

For further information, please do not hesitate to contact ASSAD by Email: ochajoe@gmail.com