



Gambella Nilotes United Movement/Army

Press Release

12th April 2014, Gambella

“Ethiopian Government Must Stop Resettling Refugees throughout the Gambella Region”

Gambella Nilotes United Movement (GNUM/A) condemns the Ethiopian government’s plans and act of creating and establishing many refugees camps for the South Sudanese refugees in Anuaks’ land of Gambella without the will of the local communities. This is deliberate of the EPRDF/TPLF government’s racist plans to create animosity to carry out ethnic cleansing conflicts in the region to displace and extinct the indigenous Nilotes from their ancestral lands, as usual, in exchange to promote the systematic settlements and occupations of Northerners in the land they don’t own in the South-western regions of Ethiopia. As experiences speak loudly of the past, GNUM alerts all concerned parties that the spread of the refugees camps in the Anuak land is nothing else than to trigger ethnic cleansing conflicts to serve the EPRDF/TPLF government’s interest in the region.

The EPRDF/TPLF government should stop holding the indigenous Nilotes as human hostage by using the refugees as instrument to victimize the local communities. Historically, Gambella as prone to most Sudanese border crossing conflicts, on many occasions, its people were the victims despite their generous hospitality and compassion they usually shown to Sudanese refugees since the first civil war of Anya-nya 1 of 1955, that carried out its insurgency throughout the area and culminated in signing of peace agreement in Addis Ababa in 1972. When the signed peace agreement was not fully accepted by the warring groups, it had ended up in the formation of Any-nya II faction which also continued its military operation in Gambella until 1983 when the SPLM/A was born in Itang District of Gambella Region, Southwest Ethiopia. The SPLA/M continued its war against the Arab dominant Sudanese government, with strong local supports including all kinds of resources such as manpower, minerals, animals, fish,

forests, water, land, and the like, to make sure freedom prevailed for all the oppressed South Sudanese people.

The most inspired Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed in Kenya, in 2005, leading to the formation of the current independence youngest South Sudanese government (GOSS), was equally the outcome of Gambella's people contribution and efforts to which the history must recognize and respect. What is being witness in the life of Gambella people inside the region and to those in exiles in South Sudan is contrary to what any human can comprehend.

Despite all the contributions and efforts to South Sudanese historical struggles for their freedom the people of Gambella experienced many atrocities from rebel fighters starting from Anya-nya I to Any-nya II and SPLA/M while the Ethiopian government was condoning the killings with intention to wipe away the indigenous Nilotes from their lands by opening up four refugee camps in Itang, Bonga, Pinyudo and Dimma. The history confirms that the rebel fighters particularly the SPLA/M soldiers were used by the Derg government on many occasions in carrying out those atrocities in Gambella. Some of these atrocities should not be forgotten as they present fresh memories in minds of the victims.

It should be reminded that in September 1989 the SPLA fighters, through administration of Thwat Pal and Joshua Dilwal (Nuers) who were governors of Gambella Region posted by the Ethiopian government to marginalize and instigate ethnic conflicts between the Anuaks and Nuers in the region, had carried out massive massacres on the innocent civilian Anuaks in Pinyudo, Itang and Pukumu/Akado. In these massacres more than 500 Anuaks civilian were gunned down by SPLA soldiers among whom 300 were buried by bulldozer in Pinyudo alone; women were raped, children kidnapped, properties looted and burnt down, cattle raided, people forcefully depopulated and many villages remained deserted up to day. In all these massacres the Ethiopian (Derg) government did not take any action against those SPLA/M fighters who perpetrated crime against its own citizens as they are denied citizenship in the country.

When the government of Mengistu was overthrown by the current government EPRDF/TPLF government in 1991, all refugee of South Sudan and the SPLA fighters run to their liberated areas across the border before they were welcomed back to Gambella refugee camps again. Despite the atrocities committed by the SPLA in Gambella region, the indigenous people of Gambella did not take any revenge against the Sudanese refugees, although the TPLF/EPRDF government through its Administration for Refugees and Returnees Affairs (ARRA) department of Interior Minister continued to

instigate ethnic conflicts against the local people. The Itang Anuaks massacres of 2002 that paved the way to December 13th 2003 Anuaks' genocide; substantiate the Ethiopian government's roles in sponsoring the ethnic cleansing conflict in the region against the Anuak community in particular. It has remained a perpetual Ethiopian governments' ambition to eliminate the indigenous people of Gambella to control the fertile land, as the Ethiopian government considers resources more important than the people of Gambella whom are not recognized as citizens in Ethiopia.

In all the Sudanese civil wars the Gambella indigenous people have shown tremendous supports and friendship for which they should be remembered with respect. Should they bear the brunt while the Ethiopian government in total neglect and discrimination to its citizens of Gambella is cunningly claiming the benefits from the South Sudan, in reciprocity to what the Gambella people had paid for the cause of Sudanese refugees?

Currently, many refugees mainly from Gambella are facing insecurity in the South Sudan. Since 2012 until now more than 50 refugees have been expedited to Ethiopia by the South Sudanese government including the former governor of Gambella Regional State Mr. Okello Akway and four Anuaks and four Oromos total of nine of Ethiopian refugees. These people have sought refuge in the neighbouring countries for the insecurity they faced in Ethiopia in protest against the ongoing killing, land grab, forced displacement and lack of freedom in their country. It breaches the international laws for any credible sovereign country like South Sudanese government that has signed these laws under the UN convention and protocols, for which it should be accounted for. South Sudan has the right to tell refugees to leave its country peacefully than breach the international law and expedite the refugees to danger the lives Ethiopia.

The refugees expedited to Ethiopia are in most deplorable situation in which some are serving death sentences, life sentences and some are killed. And yet, the refugees from Gambella living in many parts of South Sudan generally are facing insecurity. They are not getting adequate services to frustrate their lives to opt their conditional repatriation. The Ethiopian security through few of its sponsored puppets is increasingly carrying out an empty propaganda among the Gambella refugees to go back home pretending as if things are rights at home but only to escape the international mounting pressures against the grand human rights violations and abuses inside the country.

We appeal that the Gambella refugees should be evacuated from the South Sudan country to other International laws' abiding countries if the situation doesn't improve soon. The Ethiopian government should stop sponsoring individuals in South Sudan or elsewhere in Africa to harass the lives of the Ethiopian refugees living in exiles.

We express our concern for the South Sudanese refugee influx to Gambella and appeal to the international concerned bodies to scrutiny watch the Ethiopia government in instigating ethnic violence as tool to eliminate the indigenous populations from their ancestral land and homes in Gambella to serve its interests.

We strongly condemn the ethnic conflict cropped up in South Sudan since mid-December 2013 that has resulted in displaced of thousands of refugees from their homes. We wish to call for reconciliation to restore peace and stability for all South Sudanese people to implement the vision and mission of the SPLM/A for all its citizens.

However, we condemn the Ethiopian government act in using the Sudanese refugees as instrumental, to suite its ambition of dislocation of the indigenous populations from their ancestral lands to make full control of resources without the will of the local communities by multiplying refugee camps to instigate ethnic conflicts in the region.

With this kind of refugees' influx to neighbouring countries, currently, we are witnessing the conflict between the South Sudanese refugee and the local community of Uganda and those in Maban of Blue Nile of South Sudan. There was a serious conflict between Maban community and the South Sudanese refugees whereby the local community were displaced from their land and they are demanding the Sudan government to repatriate back the refugee within two months before any conflict arises in the area. In addition to these atrocities of South Sudanese refugee against the local community, on April 10th 2014, the Opuo people of Itang District of Gambella Region were attacked and their properties were looted by South Sudanese armed refugee.

The same incidents will definitely occur in Gambella in which Ethiopian government should be held accountable for any loss of life between the local people and the refugees, and we call the Ethiopian government to stop scattered settlement of refugee in different parts of Gambella immediately.

Moreover, it must understand that the Ethiopian government is not neutral and will never be neutral in the current South Sudanese conflict as it does to Somalia. With our reliable sources most the refugees who are crossing the border from South Sudan to Gambella, are trained soldiers and they endorse the spread of many refugees camps set by Ethiopian government to be used as military training headquarters. The Ethiopian government is currently arming the South Sudanese rebels to destabilize the peace and security in South Sudan and other Eastern Africa countries. With this obscure attitude and intension of the Ethiopian government in current South Sudanese conflict, Gambella will be a battle

ground to weaken the existing social coping mechanism of local communities and to militarize the area.

We therefore, call upon the United Nations, Super Powers, Diplomats and all other humanitarian organizations operating in Ethiopia, to closely monitor the political and military activities along the border of Gambella and South Sudan to pre-empt the Ethiopian government from arming the refugees to escalate violence in the area.

We also call upon the UN, humanitarian organizations and other concerned multilateral International organizations to monitor the insecurity of the Ethiopian refugees particularly the refugees from Gambella in South Sudan and consider options of relocation of these refugees for safety; and in accord with the international law of which the South Sudanese has signed under the UN convention and protocols, we call for accountability for the people expedited to Ethiopia by the South Sudanese government and demand the release of these prisoners from Ethiopia.

Finally, we call upon the TPLF/EPRDF government to stop killing of the indigenous Nilotes; to release our brothers including former governor of Gambella Mr. Okello Akway kept in various prisons in the country under inhumanly conditions; to restore our communal land rights and ownership in accord with the UN provisions; to respect our territorial integrity to stop government extinction measures; to ensure our independent development and foreign policies to secure our freedom and prosperity in our territories.

In conclusion the Gambella Nilotes United Movement/Army (GNUM/A) will continue its struggle for all people of Gambella and all the South-western Nilotes and Omotic to ensure freedom, justice, security and prosperity are brought to our people in their land.

**“Unite We Must, to Fight for the Rights and Justice of
Indigenous of South-western Nilotic-Omotic Peoples of
Ethiopia”**

**“Freedom and Justice for All the Oppressed Nilotes of
Gambella”**

**GAMBELLA NILOTES UNITED MOVEMENT/ARMY (GNUM/A)
CENTRAL COMMITTEE**

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