

## **Press Statement:**

November 8, 2016

*“Lord, Make me an instrument of your peace; where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy”  
(St. Francis of Assisi)*

I would like to start by stating that Peace is within our reach. We must believe in it for us to obtain it. Today I am a believer, and I must start with myself in order for others to believe in this peace.

Let me first and foremost express my gratitude to the leadership of His Excellency President Salva Kiir Mayardit, Gen. Taban Deng Gai and the entire leadership of the Transitional Government of National Unity for their dedication to our people. I am positive that we shall achieve that for which we have been longing for generations—a lasting peace and prosperity for our people

As we all know, South Sudan is facing difficult times. Our economy is failing; our people are divided; and our relationship with the international community is fragile. Despite these challenges, I'm more hopeful than ever that with the guidance of our leaders we will overcome, we will achieve and we will triumph. Yes, we must inform and advise our leaders. But above all, we must implore our leaders to put first the sake of our nation-- a call to which, I believe deeply, they will answer victoriously.

Today I am here to state with pure heart that I am returning home to the land of my birth, South Sudan. I look forward to being part of the healing, peace, reconciliation and forgiveness process. I strongly advocate for the unity of our people. I was in South Sudan during the great times; I must be in South Sudan during the challenging times.

As a son of South Sudan, I cannot expect someone else to care for my beloved country. This is the utmost duty that I owe this beautiful land. I was fortunate to work closely with our nation's leadership in the past and from today I will humbly resume my duties as a citizen of the nation and preach peace amongst our people. We shall not leave any village, payam, county or city untouched with the word of peace. I hope to set an example for others who are interested in nation building, advocating that we can re-build our nation together with our leaders.

As part of the most important group in our country, the Youth, I believe that we have an uphill battle toward achieving success. Youth are our most numerous and, by far, our most valuable asset—one which we must cultivate. Young people are the engine of our nation and must be empowered to leave a footprint for the next generation. The young men and women of any society are an important part of the national dialogue—we are the innovators, the builders, the workers and the defenders of our nation. We are the ones most affected by the decisions of our elders, and thus we

must be constructively involved in the arena of ideas, advocacy and politics. The elders of our country must be supported and also advised on national affairs by the youth themselves because the outcomes of decisions that are taken today will fall on us to either rectify or to build upon. It will take the collective effort of all, and especially the youth, to put down the tools of war, tribalism, and hatred to instead build a future—a future of peace, diversity and love. I call on the Youth as the heartbeat of South Sudan to stand together as one for our beloved country. Let us think about unity and our future.

Finally, I would like to thank H.E. First Vice President Gen. Taban Deng Gai for encouraging me to return. Because of his wisdom to preach peace, I have no doubts in returning. I am grateful for his efforts in working closely with his brother H.E. President Gen. Salva Kiir Mayardit to achieve peace. We must be the change we want!

Let us stand together as one people, despite our tribe, our age, our religion and our class. South Sudan is bigger than any of us. Let us instead think of what the future generations will say about us and about the inheritance we have left for them. Let us leave them with a better South Sudan. This is the best thing we can do for them.

***One People, One Nation!***

I'm proud to be a South Sudanese!

God bless our Leadership,  
God Bless the People,  
God Bless South Sudan

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Choul Laam', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

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