

Resolution on the Situation in South Sudan

National Council of Churches USA

Governing Board

For Consideration: May 20, 2014

Last month, the world commemorated the 20th anniversary of one of the most horrific events of the 20th century, the Rwandan Genocide. The sadness of this commemoration was compounded by the fact that genocide took place again a decade later in Darfur, and that it may be happen again soon in other contexts.

Among the many places where crimes against humanity, mass atrocities, and other warning signs of genocide are occurring, is South Sudan. The world looked on with hope when South Sudan became the world's newest country in 2011. After 22 years of civil war, which took the lives of nearly 2 million people in the south and left another 4 million displaced, there was hope that the horror of war would not cast a shadow on South Sudan's future. Sadly, the country remains mired in conflict.

As is often the case, this conflict is complex and includes military and economic tensions with Sudan to the north. It also includes internal political, economic and security challenges, as well as inter-ethnic and inter-communal violence, and other internal and external challenges with regard to good governance and the rule of law. Today countless lives in South Sudan are threatened and neighboring countries are fearful of potential regional spill-over effects.

In the face of such a situation the NCC, as well as individual member communions, are in solidarity with their partners in their work to end the suffering. To name a few of these partners and some of their primary initiatives:

- Church World Service is working with refugees, including resettlement, and on humanitarian advocacy, along with partner denominational immigration, refugee, and migration ministries;
- World Council of Churches and All Africa Council of Churches are accompanying churches of South Sudan in their ministry to foster peace, justice and reconciliation even as the violence continues in their midst;
- Christian World Communions, such as the Lutheran World Federation, the World Communion of Reformed Churches, and the Baptist World Alliance are assisting in resettlement and humanitarian aid;
- Churches in the US are offering prayer and material support for communities in South Sudan, and for their diaspora communities;
- Church leaders in South Sudan, through the South Sudan Council of Churches, are demanding an end to violence and the establishment of peace, so as to "save South Sudan from sliding into anarchy and genocide"; and,

- United to End Genocide is mounting advocacy to end hostilities, foster civilian protection, ensure humanitarian access, provide human rights monitoring, and obtain accountability for atrocities committed.

The National Council of Churches, is an advocate for peace, as it has been since its founding. In moments of crisis such as the one now facing South Sudan, the collective voice of the communions that comprise the NCC have been clear and strong in calling for policies and actions to prevent violence, to cease hostilities when they occur, and to foster reconciliation as a means of transforming conflict and injustice into justice and peace.

Therefore, with respect to the situation in South Sudan, the NCC resolves to:

- call on its member churches to focus their attention on this situation and offer support as they are able;
- urge members of our respective congregations to support peace and to advocate for just policies;
- encourage relevant parties in South Sudan to cease hostilities and convert their energies to peacemaking;
- call on the international community to take the necessary actions to end the conflict, promote reconciliation, and establish peace;
- urge all Christian faithful to pray for the well-being of South Sudan and its peoples; and,
- demonstrate its solidarity with the churches and all people in South Sudan, as a sign of our mutual hope in the God who “is [our] strength and [our] might, [and who] has become [our] salvation” (Is 12:2, NRSV).