

Remarks by the Secretary-General at the Consultative Meeting on South Sudan, with UN, IGAD and the African Union

Addis Ababa, 27 January 2018

One year ago, it was obvious to me that it was absolutely essential to overcome some misunderstandings of the past and to make sure that there would be a full alignment of the United Nations and the African Union and IGAD, in the conduct of the international community in addressing the problems South Sudan and the plight of the people of South Sudan. I think this alignment has been very successful. What has been achieved under the leadership of IGAD is remarkable.

I would like to congratulate the IGAD Council of Ministers and the Special Envoy for, first of all, the High Level Revitalization Forum and, second, the immediate results that were obtained with the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities, protection of civilians and humanitarian access.

I think these are remarkable achievements but I think we need to go beyond the alignment of the three organizations into guaranteeing also the alignment of the Member States of these three organizations.

First of all, it is clear to me and, I'm sorry to say so, but I've never seen a political elite with so little interested in the well-being of its own people and this, I believe, is creating the need for a continued pressure of all of us in order to make sure that they assume their responsibilities as leaders of their own people instead of prolonging the conflict to the detriment of the enormous suffering South Sudanese people.

The second point, that's clear to me, is that in any region, including in my own region, there are contradictions and conflicts of interests. This is inevitable, also in the neighborhood of South Sudan but it is in my opinion absolutely essential and I see IGAD's role is first of all to make sure that any contradictions that might exist among the neighbors of South Sudan is not translated into an influence in the internal situation of South Sudan. This is true at the level of IGAD and it's also true at the level of other neighbours that are outside IGAD. There's also a role for the African Union and, to be very clear, it's true for some other countries around the world that also have their own opinions and their own strategies related to South Sudan - not necessarily aligned with this common effort that IGAD, the African Union and the United Nations are developing. So we need to make sure that not only we are together but that we bring all the countries of our organizations to be together in a common commitment.

Now, I am in full agreement that the implementation of the very important achievements that were reached, thanks to IGAD leadership, might require tougher measures and I don't think those tougher measures can be originated outside in the context of the United Nations or the Security Council. I think they need to be originated in the region and I think that the leadership of IGAD is absolutely essential together with the African Union.

And I'll be ready, in the United Nations, in addressing the Security Council, to support any decisions that you take in order to make sure that true accountability in relation to the violations of the ceasefire or the international humanitarian law are effectively addressed.

You can fully count on my commitment to support your initiative.

You can also be sure that I will not take initiatives that will undermine the unity of action that is necessary in relation to our effectiveness in making this conflict end.

On the other hand, you can count fully on the United Nations. We will do our best with the difficulties we have to make UNMISS as effective as possible in support of the stability of the country. We are fully engaged with the regional protective force. We are fully engaged with humanitarian programs and I think the international community had a meaningful success in averting hunger from becoming a much more spread trauma in South Sudan.

But again, we are at your service to work together, fully respecting African leadership in the solution of the dramatically African problem and recognizing that our role is a supporting, but a supporting role that is completely committed at your side.

Thank you