

Speeches full

H.E. GENERAL SALVA KIIR MAYARDIT,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN
MAIDEN SPEECH
ON THE OCCASION OF THE PROCLAMATION
OF INDEPENDENCE

Juba, 9TH JULY 2011

Your Excellency, Field Marshal Omar Hassan Ahmed Al-Bashir, President of the Republic of the Sudan,

Your Excellency, Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, Secretary General of the United Nations,

Your Excellency, Mr. Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, Chairperson of the African Union and President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea,

Your Excellencies Heads of States and Governments,

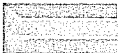
Your Excellencies Head of Delegations,

Your Excellencies Sudanese Political Party Leaders and Leaders of the three Branches of our Government,

Distinguished Members of the Diplomatic Corps and Invited Guests,

The Friends of South Sudan, and Most Importantly

The People of South Sudan,



I welcome you all to this historic event in the name of Almighty God and in the name of the glorious revolution of the people of South Sudan. Before I proceed with my address, may we rise up to observe a minute of silence in honor of our fallen heroes and heroines who paid the ultimate price for our freedom and dignity. This day would not have been possible without their sacrifices. Let me also once again state clearly the sacrifice made by the founder of our nation, Dr. John Garang De Mabior. This great day is testimony that our martyrs did not die in vain!



May I also take this opportunity to thank you all for honoring our invitation to come and celebrate with us during this momentous occasion for our people. We also thank all invitees who sent us congratulatory messages and promised to visit us when they are able to do so in the future. I salute the freedom fighters from all over the Northern Sudan who joined the SPLM and are still yearning for true peace, justice and democracy. The people and Government of the Republic of South Sudan will stand with you in solidarity and in the search for permanent peace.

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today is the most important day for the people of South Sudan, the proclamation of whose birth and emergence as a member of the community of world nations you have just witnessed. It is a day which will be forever engraved in our hearts and minds. For you our citizens in the villages, Bomas, Payams, Counties, States, and the Diaspora, let us congratulate ourselves and give praise to Almighty God for having made it possible for us to witness this day. We have waited for 56 years for this day. It is a dream that has come true!



My Dear Compatriots,

Today is the day to take off our hats in saluting and honoring our martyrs, heroes and heroines. It is the day to ponder how much Dr. John Garang De Mabior, founder of our nation, and all our martyrs whose blood has cemented our national foundation, have done for us. It is the occasion to cherish the true value of this achievement. While it is the time to remind ourselves about the true implications of their ultimate sacrifice; it is also the right time for us to assess what we have done for their loved ones who have survived them.




I take this opportunity to assure you that the Government of the Republic of South Sudan will continue to do everything possible to care for the families of our fallen heroes and heroines.



We must thank all the friends in the world because without their support and commitment we may not have made it to this day. They were with us during our dark days. They gave us food when we were hungry, water when we were thirsty, medication when we were sick, courage when we were weakened, they gave education to our children; and most important, they stayed with us to the end.



A happy day like this should not dwell on bad memories. But it is important to recognize that for many generations, this land has seen untold suffering and death. We have been bombed, maimed, enslaved, and treated worse than a refugee in our own country. **We may forgive but we will not forget!** Let me also say that some of our suffering has been self-inflicted. We squabble over issues that can be resolved peacefully. We invite our common enemies to help us kill ourselves. May this day mark a new beginning of




tolerance, unity and love for one another. Let our cultural and ethnic diversity be a source of pride and strength, not parochialism and conflict. Let all the citizens of this new nation be equal before the law and have equal access to opportunities and equal responsibilities to serve the motherland. We are all South Sudanese. We may be a Zande, Kakwa, Nuer, Toposa, Dinka, Lotuko, Anyuak, Bari and Shilluk, but remember you are South Sudanese first.



This new nation shall strive to live in peace with its neighbors to the north, east, south and west. The Republic of South Sudan shall be a partner in all human endeavors that promote security, justice, liberty, and prosperity. As South Sudanese we know how it feels to be deprived of freedom and dignity.



This Republic is at the tail end of economic development. All the indices of human welfare put us at the bottom of all humanity. All citizens of this nation must therefore fully dedicate their energies and resources to the construction of a vibrant economy. The independence we celebrate today transfers the responsibility for



our destiny to our hands. From today on, we shall have no excuses or scapegoats to blame. It is our responsibility to protect ourselves, our land and our resources. It shall be the duty of this government to prepare and equip the next generation with the necessary skills. The challenges are great but we must begin the task of facing up to them from today. While the pillars of a house are important, its foundation is even more critical. We must build a strong foundation for our new nation.



During the Interim Period, the Government of Southern Sudan faced daunting challenges from within and without. The consequence has been the inability to deliver basic services to our people. We are grateful to the international community for addressing the gap. As an independent country, we must focus on the process of service delivery and development. This is only possible if we have a government whose first, second, and final priorities are public interest, public interest, and public interest!

Governments are set up to serve the people they represent. But it is also the duty and responsibility of the people to recognize the limitations of government especially as regards to resources. We must acknowledge the fact that our needs may be unlimited whereas our resources are finite. Once we are able to do this with honesty and a high sense of realism, together we can determine and set our own priorities.



Our leaders, from the most humble ranks to the highest offices in the land, have to rally behind this national call. Our leaders, be they in politics, administration, churches, and the entire civil society are collectively responsible for serving the public interest first and self last. Those who are unwilling or unable to make the sacrifices required in the public service will not be part of this government. They have options through which to satisfy personal aspirations and pursue other ambitions outside government. Transparency and accountability is pivotal. Official corruption has been one of our major challenges during the interim period. In order to develop our country, and deliver on the important goals of our National Development Plan, it is critical that we fight corruption with dedication, rigour, and commitment.


As President, I pledge to you to do all I can to remove this cancer. We will work closely with our development partners as we move forward.



Notwithstanding decades of war and suffering, the people of South Sudan do not harbor any bitterness towards our erstwhile compatriots. Our people by their attitude and actions will demonstrate to our Sudanese brothers and sisters and to all our neighbors that we are indeed their partners in peace - committed to the principles of good neighborliness. We do sincerely hope that all outstanding matters between us will be resolved expeditiously and in a manner that leaves neither side nursing a sense of injustice. Addressing remaining differences will help eliminate any irritants that will prevent the two states from having amicable and productive relations.

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we look forward to becoming Africa's 54th State and 193rd nation of the United Nations, South Sudan pledges to abide by international covenants and conventions to which we shall seek to



accede as soon as possible. We will be a responsible member of the international community, playing our role as defined by international law and as dictated by our own values and ethics. Having been at the receiving end of injustice and aggression for the better part of our post-colonial independence, the people of South Sudan will never allow themselves to be categorized as aggressors or trouble-makers.

We the people of South Sudan have experienced what it is to be a refugee. We hope that this has been our last war and that our people will never again have to cross our borders in search of security. Those who flee to our country from war or persecution will be treated with sympathy and empathy and in accordance with international law because not only is it the right thing to do, but more importantly it would be one way for us to say thank you to the world has done for us. Let me take this opportunity to say thank you to all the countries, International NGOs', particularly NPA, multilateral organizations, and the tax payers who fund them in order to keep us alive.



Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The people of South Sudan are thrilled and gratified that a good number of the very important people who have honored us with their presence here today represent countries which played a crucial role in brokering the peace agreement that paved the way for this historic event. These include heads of state and governments as well as other dignitaries who signed the CPA as witnesses. In the eyes of our people, you are our friends and heroes. At this juncture, may I ask your Excellencies, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen to join me in paying tribute to all those who gave us a hand when we were badly in need. Please join me and let us wave to the masses of South Sudan and offer them the opportunity to see you physically and say thank you to all of you.




My Dear Compatriots South Sudanese,

The eyes of the world are on us. Our well-wishers, including those who are now sharing with us the joy of this tremendous event, will be watching closely to see if our very first steps in nationhood are steady and confident. They will surely want to see us as


a worthwhile member of the international community by shunning policies that may draw us into confrontation with other. They will be happy to see us succeed economically and want us enjoying political stability. What this means is that the responsibilities of South Sudan will now be accentuated more than ever before, requiring that we rise to the challenge accordingly.




It is my ardent belief that you are aware that our detractors have already written us off, even before the proclamation of our independence. They say we will slip in to civil war as soon as our flag is hoisted. They justify that by arguing that we are incapable of resolving our problems through dialogue. They charge that we are quick to revert to violence. They claim that our concept of democracy and freedom is faulty. It is incumbent upon us to prove them all wrong! On this note, I would like to again declare a public amnesty to all those who may have taken up arms for one reason or another to lay down those arms and come to join your brothers and sisters to build this new nation.



Now that we have obtained the proverbial political kingdom, we are called upon to do what it takes to sustain a sovereign nation. We now have to focus on economic development as the key to prosperity and satisfaction of all the human needs that make life worth living. The resources with which nature has endowed our land are abundant enough to attract the interest of development partners both from the public and private sectors from many countries across the world. So we should exploit these possibilities to better the lives of our people.



Our success in achieving economic progress obviously lies in our hands. While investing in human capital development, we may need to engage international expertise and professional assistance in some areas of management of our economy, but we must provide the requisite leadership in that respect. We will not shy away from seeking outside support in areas that we are in need at this critical juncture.



Critical to the future of our people and the endeavour to fulfill their aspirations, match their hopes and ambitions, is a government that is democratic, inclusive and accountable. My pledge to you

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you. When you cry, we cry, when you bleed we bleed. I pledge to you today that we will find a just peace for all. I will work with my brother President Al-Bashir and the international community to find a just and lasting peace. There is an African proverb that says: The night may be too long; but the day will come for sure! And let me tell you, I see the light at the end of the tunnel. Let us celebrate today, but we must get to work right away.



Finally, a stable and peaceful South Sudan requires a region at peace. I would like to strongly urge my brothers in Ethiopia and Eritrea to find a peaceful way to resolve their differences. I would also like to appeal to my brothers and sisters in Somalia to do the same. And that will be a special gift for the people of South Sudan.

Thank you and God bless the people and Republic of South Sudan!

God bless our neighbours!

God bless Africa and the world!