

Unofficial Translation

Original Arabic

Speech of President el Bashir in Juba 4-1-2013 before the referendum

In the name of Allah, the compassionate, the merciful and pray and peace on the Prophet and Messenger of Allah

I am really happy to be among you today in Juba, and happy to meet so many of the leadership in all its official and civil society representation, to be able to talk to you and reiterate our message. Our message is one of peace, and if people refer back to our speeches since the first day we assumed office, you can see that our highest objective was peace. We said it openly that Sudan is facing many problems, political, economic, security and social. But all these problems were a derivative of the war in the south. In order to resolve these problems we had to solve the main reason, which is war.

When we assumed power, if people recall, and in our first address, we said we came for peace. We said this even before establishing our cabinet and tried to contact the Movement, but we were unsuccessful. But the same was with the former government which did not, either have a line of communication with them. At the end we communicated through the Ethiopian government, and we had preliminary talks. We were new, with little experience, but we benefited from the talks as we discovered that we have to have a program for peace. Two month after assuming power, we convened the National Reconciliation Conference for peace. The participants constituted different stakeholders including those against unity and those who were for it, while many sat outside waiting for the government to collapse. Even in this climate there were excellent debates. The first day was difficult as people wanted to breathe out the hot air. We came out with a clear program for peace. We took the program to Addis, Abuja One and Abuja Two, we went even to Frankfurt. For the first time, the conference recommended a federal system. We accepted the outcome of the conference and declared that, which was the call by the people of the South since the Juba Conference in 1947.

We then reached the station of Naivasha, and the patience we showed in the negotiations, that continued for years. We upgraded the level of negotiations and opted for direct talks between the Vice President Ali Osman Taha and our late brother Dr John Garang. They sat thirty days together and came with a document that was a result of extensive discussion until we came to the peace agreement, with all its details and complexities. I say we have succeeded. Of course, there is no 100% success, and we have surpassed all stages. Those who didn't want stability, love bad news, because bad news, because the media like them. The British say "no news is good news". They preferred news of trouble, war and killings so as to be the front page of their journals. We have disappointed those who didn't want peace... We came with a conviction, including the most difficult one, that is of self-determination. We have experienced attempts to force unity since 1955. What was the result? If we asked the people in 1955 a big majority of 90% would be for unity. Why did this change with time? Because war is all grievance. When bullets come out there is death, destruction and more grievance and hate. Therefore, our conviction is that forcing unity is a futile exercise, so we decided to make unity optional, with the conviction that our brothers and sisters in the South would see that the gains they got in the peace

agreement were enough to assure them that they now live in a country where they enjoy all their rights, even some think they got more than they are entitled, as they exclusively rule the south, and at the same time have a 30% share in ruling the north within the federal system. We were convinced that the dowry of unity, whatever it is, is not costly, and that unity is better for the people of Sudan in the north and south. But we are not going to reject the will of the political forces, who all agreed to give the people the right for self-determination. When we signed the agreement, we did with the intention of honoring it because we are people who keep promises, and in our sayings a man is tied by his tongue and not his foot. We are committed but we will still call for unity, because it is our conviction that it is a benefit, strength and security for all the people of the Sudan. However, if the wish of the people of the South is otherwise we would welcome it. But we all know that levels of interdependence and tied interests exist among the north and south which cannot be matched by any two other states.

I have talked with our brothers, that if secession happened how we should minimize the negative outcomes that could arise from secession, and transform the gains we would have had if we had unity. We cited the European model. They fought with each other extensively, and involved others in the wars so called world wars, although they were European wars. But because they were the masters of the world, they made it a world war, and millions perished. But they sat together because they recognized that war does not bring benefits and established the European Union and consolidated their shared interests. Now every country has its flag, government, constitution, law and mutual interests. But they are all grouped together.

We know our interests, but the question is how to sit responsibly and seek together our interests and maximize our benefits for our mutual interests.

We are fully ready in the federal government. Of course there will be no federal government after secession. Whatever happens, as we came today, we will come to celebrate with you. Don't think that you will be celebrating here while we are mourning there. Yes, there will be melancholy, because Sudan is divided. But, I will be happy if, after the referendum and the creation of the two states that we achieved the final and real peace so that the citizens in the north and south could enjoy it, and then focus on fast development and progress for the two parties. We needed peace, and we needed to exploit our meager resources to make the best of it, to utilize them for the building of our country, development and progress.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all those who stood with us, supported us, gave assistance and opened their countries and their good offices to enable us achieve peace. They had a big role to play and facilitate until we reached this final stage. Things went smoothly in spite of not being able to meet the timelines, but we are satisfied because of the shortage of time.

Now, the final stage for the referendum is smoothly completed and we are entering a very important phase, the actual voting, and the following stage of declaring the results. We, the people of Sudan are civilized people and teachers. Some people thought that the recent elections will be a replica of what happened in some countries, and the media waited eagerly the chaos, killing and carnage that will ensue, but the people of the Sudan disappointed them with their civilized behavior, what-so-ever the

results were painful. We will give them a second lesson. We will accept the results whatever they are. I assure you we are with whatever you chose. Even after the establishment of the state of the South, you will find us, when you call on us, for any technical, logistical, consultation, experience or training. We are ready. No one is more for that than us. We want the process to proceed smoothly as we did in the elections. We want people to testify that all people of the south, inside or outside the country were able to vote freely. The leadership of this country will stand and salute the wish of the citizens in the south.

We pray to God to protect our country, and for the results of the referendum to be a blessing on the people of all the Sudan, wherever they are. I wish you good health and stay well.