



Inclusion of displaced persons in implementation of South Sudan's peace agreement key to success

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JUBA – “Inclusion of displaced persons in the implementation of South Sudan’s peace agreement is key to success at a time of unprecedented opportunity to find lasting solutions”, UNHCR’s Representative to South Sudan, Arafat Jamal, expressed Thursday.

Addressing a virtual webinar facilitated by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, and the GP20 on the inclusion of refugees, internally displaced persons and returnees in the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the resolution of conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS), Jamal called for an inclusive path of healing, reconstruction and revival.

“For peace to endure, the voices and the will of those uprooted and affected by conflict must be heard and included. Around the world, refugees and IDPs say, ‘nothing about us, without us’ said Jamal.

With nearly, 2.2 million South Sudanese refugees hosted in neighbouring countries, another 1.6 million internally displaced and some 345,000 refugees spontaneously returned to South Sudan, their voices at all stages, including in consultative and dialogue processes that are shaping the path to peace, remains vital.

The IGAD Special Envoy for South Sudan, Ambassador Ismail Wais, called for all-inclusive peacebuilding, noting that broad participation is integral to ensure a strong protection environment and durable solutions for those displaced. “The priorities for reconstruction of South Sudan will be determined by displaced communities through their own lived experiences.”

Delivering a presentation virtually from Adjumani in Uganda, Maia Keven Juliet, a refugee from South Sudan, urged leaders “Not to give up. Peace is a process,” and called for widespread awareness of the peace process among displaced communities. Speaking on behalf of the internally displaced community in Benitu, Gok Diang Chuong called for more opportunities for displaced persons to participate in decision making, including in the formation of the transitional government, restoration of housing, land and property rights, as well as the establishment of a commission for truth, justice, reconciliation and healing.



Joining these representatives of South Sudan's displaced communities, speakers from the United Nations, the government of South Sudan and civil society, referenced the pledges made at the Global Refugee Forum in 2019, as well as the desire to support solutions in a dignified and suitable way. This includes the creation of conditions on the ground to support return, while also ensuring the centrality of human rights in all phases of displacement, allowing affected persons to decide on solutions that are best for them.

Building on the good practices of the National Dialogue held in Juba in October of this year which provided a platform for over 40 displaced persons to be heard, as well as the affirmation within the R-ARCSS itself which critically, provides for solutions for refugees, IDPs and returnees, the meeting concluded with a call for the development of a framework to increase meaningful participation of conflict affected communities. This includes the establishment of a national taskforce and platform dedicated to ensuring displaced communities participate in peace building and reconciliation at state, regional and national level, along with the prioritisation of legislation to address protection concerns.

The webinar was organised by IGAD in coordination with UNHCR and with the support of GP 20, a multi-stakeholder initiative launched for the 20th anniversary of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.

For more information:

IGAD: Mahamed Abdillahi | Mahamed.Abdillahi@igad.int

UNHCR South Sudan: Aoife McDonnell | mcdonnel@unhcr.org

UNHCR South Sudan: Gift Friday Noah | noah@unhcr.org

GP20: Nadine Walicki | gp20@unhcr.org