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## FDP/SSAF PRESS RELEASE ON THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE RECENTLY SIGNED AGREEMENT

*“Leaders should be good listeners and should value what others have to say”, J.C Maxwell*

The recently signed so-called peace agreement is in trouble. Its implementation is now behind schedule by a month or so. Fear and lack of trust have become major impediments to the implementation of the IGAD-PLUS imposed agreement. Dr. Riek Machar has been dragging his feet and threatening not to go to Juba on the pretext that President Kiir has violated the agreement by decreeing the formation of seven more states on top of his own decreed 21 states early in the year! Admittedly, Dr. Riek became disappointed and felt abandoned by the American Administration for denying him audience with some of the hawks in the White House. All along Dr. Riek had misinterpreted the American administration sympathy with the opposition to mean an endorsement as president of South Sudan. Shamefully and undiplomatically he went as far as requesting for bodyguards from the elite American army units- the Marines!

When the so-called IGAD-PLUS compromised peace agreement was imposed on South Sudanese by the powers to be in August this year, no South Sudanese dared to celebrate except those in the UNMISS camps and who might have not had the opportunity to read the full text of the agreement. The Articles in this agreement were too cosmetic and superficial that they later on revealed the deficiencies and weaknesses inherent in them. The agreement was produced in a clever manner that it lost the meaning of a negotiated settlement which is usually premised on the principle of 'give and take'. Actually this agreement was based on the principle of 'take only'.

In fact the FDP/SSAF knew from the beginning that the agreement was a 'still born child' midwived by IGAD-PLUS. We alerted both IGAD and international community that the agreement would not be implementable. Signs that the agreement would not work were showing themselves from the date it was supposed to be signed by the parties to the conflict. **First**, President Salva Kiir absence at the signing ceremony raised many eye brows. **Second**, IGAD-Plus who knew the non attendance of President Kiir allowed Dr. Riek Machar and Pagan Amum to sign not in front of the Heads of State and Governments but in a sheltered corner. **Third**, Dr. Riek and Pagan were allowed to make alterations to the official copy of the agreement, a practice which is not a normal protocol and which renders the agreement “null and void”. President Kiir who also made his alterations before signing could be excused for doing so since the two who signed before him were allowed to make their alterations. So the agreement was full of discrepancies which were intentionally ignored perhaps IGAD Mediators were only interested in securing a signed peace than the legal practicalities of it.

Now 'the chickens have come home to roost'. What can be done to implement the imposed agreement? One of the signatories to the agreement, Dr. Riek Machar is scared to set foot in Juba unless and until all the uniformed men and women are rounded up and dumped 25 KM outside Juba. His first demand, which is the withdrawal of the UPDF, is now being implemented. We don't know what will be his next demand. We are not sure whether the First Vice president designate knows the difficulties and implications for re-allocating these huge numbers of security organs and their machinery to an undeveloped waste lands outside Juba. But what we do now know is that the brave Nuer ethnic group is being led by a coward who would want to be at the top of leadership but would not dare to have his finger nail broken! It does not occur to him that leadership is about risks including losing one's life. Does Dr. Riek want to live in Juba without even police to investigate crimes and regulate traffic? With such a frightened attitude will Dr. Riek really be an effective First Vice President who is expected to inspect government departments and even visit states?

There were many fault lines in the so-called agreement that the mediators/negotiators forced into the throats of South Sudanese which are now being regurgitated. **First**, South Sudanese stakeholders were not given the opportunity to participate in the peace talks as is the practice in conflict mediation. The current conflict in South Sudan is culturally specific and should have been mediated by those who had the knowledge and experience in such circumstances. It was not appropriate and realistic for IGAD or Troika to pick any body and entrust him with such a difficult and complicated situation and wish him success. This kind of unilateral decision making and contemptuous disregard for cultures, traditions and rights is the very reason why the world is no longer a safe place to live in. It is also the very reason why some conflicts elsewhere around the world are not being resolved because methods to resolve and mitigate them are being imported from other cultures. **Second**, the causes of the current conflict in South Sudan were not about government positions so much so that Dr. Riek Machar is awarded the position of First Vice President and some ministerial portfolios, gubernatorial and senior officials position to distribute to his supporters. This was why the FDP/SSAF has been demanding all along that all stakeholders be included in the peace talks so that they redirect the negotiations to the real causes of the conflict. Dr. Riek Machar was negotiating for his own personal gain which he got with a bonus of promotion!

For sure the whole methodology used by IGAD-PLUS for resolving the conflict in South Sudan was inappropriate and flawed. The mediators' strategy for negotiations was based on power sharing. How can power sharing methodology be used in an internal conflict in which the feuding parties belonged to one political party? After sharing power among them, do the parties to the conflict form their own separate political parties or remain in the SPLM? How can members of one party share positions in government, parliament, civil service and organized forces and yet expected to work together in trust and harmony? We think this is an unrealistic idea orchestrated by the IGAD Mediation Team as a face saving measure after they realized their eminent failure to bring peace to South Sudan. We also think the so-called Compromise agreement is a bad joke aimed at creating more conflict than peace and harmony.



As the so-called compromise peace agreement breathe its last breath, we called upon IGAD to scrap it and re-open fresh negotiations based on a home grown culturally and traditionally friendly methods of mediation and negotiation. Importing irrelevant and incompatible methods of mediation and negotiation as basis for resolving the current conflict in South Sudan will never produce peace and harmony. We also appeal to IGAD to invite all stakeholders including representatives of Traditional chiefs, Community elders, and African religion spiritual leaders and women groups from both sides of the conflict. It was unfortunate that in the past negotiation Talks women were only picked from the elite groups. This time round South Sudanese must own the Talks and any agreement that they will reach. We will never subscribe to any agreement that is dictated on us by any power on earth whatsoever.

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