

Ottawa
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Article 5 on South Sudan

Open Letter to General Lazarus Sumbeiywo

Our Articles 1, 2 and 3 were situation analysis of the conflict in South Sudan. That series shall continue. Our article 4A was the first of our series on “Who is Who”. That series shall continue as well. You have all our 4 articles.

As the process in Addis Ababa is in shambles, we are developing this “Open Letter” to General Lazarus Sumbeiywo as he is the only mediator in the trio that we have met in person and know of his track-record. Also he is the only one in the trio who has proven expertise in mediation of such complex and deep-rooted conflicts.

Dear General Sumbeiywo:

This open letter comes to you from an African Elder who has spent a considerable time of his life doing what he could for the Peoples of South Sudan. It also comes from as an expert in negotiation and mediation with a lot of behind the stage work done for the IGAD/CPA and Sudan/Ethiopia relations. You have my CV to prove it.

The Process

I do not really see one. It is a mess that cannot lead to results. We miss your “command and control” that you exhibited in Kenya and putting every stakeholder where he belongs and trimming the excesses of the intruders. Is the trio now leading the Process?

Is there division of labour between the three of you? We hear Ambassador Mesfin talking every now and then. We give you credit for not talking prematurely. Is Ambassador Mesfin the spokes person for the trio? What is your role with all the experience you have and the other two in the trio do not have? Is there hegemony by the host? What is General Mohammed Ahmed Mustafa Al-Dabi doing with only his failures following him from Darfur to Syria where he was sacked in February 2012? Where is Uganda or are they part of the conflict now and have no place in Addis? What is IGAD doing about Uganda’s flagrant intervention in the violence on one side? Does Museveni really care about IGAD or about the process? Where is Eritrea that seems to insist to have a role anytime Ethiopia is in the radar screen? When they supported the SPLM/A before the CPA, it was ONE SPLA and they were “Freedom Fighters”. Now Eritrea has decided, with Khartoum, to back Kiir. Where is the impartiality of the IGAD as an institution? What about Djibouti that hosts the seat of IGAD and they are dead silent? What is actually left of IGAD when Uganda is fighting, Sudan and Eritrea are supporting Kiir and Djibouti is silent? What you really have (and represent) is Kenya and Ethiopia having an honourable role or close to! That way IGAD becomes a “Front” an “Envelope” while others and bullies are actually running the game. It is a pity that the People of South Sudan cannot even have an honourable process set up for them. Damn “African Solidarity”. Is your government giving you the backing that you know you need as President Moi gave you? Is the Ethiopian Government giving that backing so that Mediation has teeth? If your structures are not correct your outcome cannot be correct.

What about the Bullies and Elbow-Jerkers? In IGAD/CPA she was Hilda Johnson. Is there one in your current team now? Why would Envoy Donald Booth go to meet Machar and Kiir in the company of mediation? Where on earth would that happen? Why is he (and others from Europe) so visible in the hotel lobby more than the Mediators or the party's representatives? Whose process is it anyway?

IGAD Partners Form or the like. Do you have one? Working on one? What are the Terms of Reference for them? Where are the wise men behind the scene: Ambassador Bethuel Kiplagat, Ambassador Ochieng Adala, Abel Alier who is grieving and hurt with the bloodshed. You know, as much as I do, he was behind most of the "doable options" in the IGAD/CPA. Who is responsible to tell the "Wild Coyotes" that this is not a feast for all? Where is the civil society? Where are the Research Institutes? Max Planck and Clingendael? US Institute of Peace? Where is the AU?

Process stall and shuttle to stakeholders. In which book and templates did your mediation team see the way the mediation process is run by "Shuttle Diplomacy"? Where is the grace and dignity of having mediation, its staff, its venue and host as *the* reference place for negotiations? Occasional "Shuttle Diplomacy" is fine, but not the more often. Nhial goes to Juba and life stops. The mediation takes itself and travels to Juba and life stops. What are the parties' delegated teams doing? Where is their ownership of the process? Do you recall when "Process" went on and issues of contention were left for Taha and Garang as and when they came?

Mandates. Have you checked the mandates of the two delegations? Do they have a clear written mandate? Is the mandate, if there one, enough for the flow of the "Process"? While Taban may command a strong mandate from Machar written or not, does Nhial who was picked from the street after he was sacked on July 23rd 2013 command authority enough to lead the mediation team of Kiir. I know this is not the mediation's business, but you must have a clear and strong mandate for the process to get anywhere. Look at the irony: Half the world is working on ceasefire and major garrison towns in major battles exchanging hands like coins: Until today. Will "Soft Power" as used now by the so called "International Community" (better known as "The US and the EU") do the job, or we need more of "Hard Power"? Or are the back-stage players waiting for Uganda to further weaken Machar's group?

The venue.

Why didn't IGAD/ Kenya continue to hold talks in Nairobi after one or two catastrophic sessions and went to the "5 star bush" for retreats' serenity? Why did your country learn the lesson of having the sessions in a retreat after the success of Lake Bogoria in 2000? Ethiopia is not short of fascinating retreats. Addis is not a credible venue for such an undertaking. Mohamed Hussein Al Amoudi is making more money! Can the process still firm up and shape up?

Stay well

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