

## South Sudan calls for religious tolerance and peaceful coexistence

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August 19, 2012 (JUBA )- South Sudan on Sunday called for tolerance and peaceful coexistence between different religious groups and denominations, a day after Muslim believers in the new nation ended the holy month of Ramadan.

Mark Lotede, an advisor on religious affairs for the country's President, congratulated Muslim believers in the country for showing "courage" while fasting describing it a commitment to tolerate temptations.

Over 10% of South Sudanese are Muslim, while the majority are Christian or practice traditional African beliefs.

He urged South Sudanese to join the rest of the Muslim world to celebrate the festival of Eid which follows Ramadan. A press release from Lotede's office, he asked that South Sudanese continue to live in an atmosphere of "peace and unity".

"This is a day the people of this world, both Muslims and non-Muslims, should forget about their differences regardless of political ideologies, race colour or sex, and come together in the spirit of oneness and forgive each other of the sins and wrongs committed in the past, and pray for a better society in the interest and benefit of the human race."

However, he asked that those who died in South Sudan's war with Islamic dominated north Sudan not be forgotten. South Sudan became the world's youngest nation in July 2011.

The Secretary General of the Islamic Council in the country, Atahir Bior also called also for peaceful coexistence with other religious groups explaining religion should not be used as a basis of division.

Bior reminded Muslim constituents that the end of Ramadan should not mean the end of good behaviours and practices.

"The conduct that guided us throughout this holy month should be the same that we should endeavour to continue with throughout the year. We should at all times remember that submission to God (Allah) has no time frame, as long as we are people obedient to our lord, it is incumbent upon us to uphold his commandments any time anywhere", Bior said in a televised statement on South Sudan Television on Sunday.

"Let's continue to act within the dictates of good moral behaviours, be honest, respectful and always keep remembering those people who do not have the pleasure of food and wealth".

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