

Lakes state youth leader calls for peace and reconciliation

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August 23, 2012 (RUMBEK) - The newly elected chairman of the Lakes State Youth Union (LSYU), Apuk Deng Reech. has called upon the state's eight counties to preach peace and reconciliation among the state's respective clans.

The new youth chairman made this call on Sunday after a two day peace and reconciliation conference, in Abiriu payam of Cueibet County, which was the scene of fighting between the Waat and Ayuel communities in July leaving 24 dead, several wounded, and many cattle stolen.

“Time for peace and reconciliation now - it is time now to support our government and ask our government to offer job opportunities to [the] youth of Lakes state across its eight counties” said Reech.

The government of Lakes State has the capacity to combat insecurity when information about insecurity is communicated to the police and army by local people, the new youth leader said.

Security would be improved by establishing community police that work either side of county and *payam* [district] borders, he suggested.

Reech was elected on 21 July 2012 in a hotly contested election held in Rumbek at Akon Buoi Hall. He won the election with 22 votes out of 57.

His urged the entire of youth of Lakes state to immediately stop spreading divisive propaganda and urge them to join the government to improve law and order by handing over illegal weapons to the police and army.

Voluntary disarmament would only work if young people participated, Reech said.

Lakes State Governor Chol Tong Mayay promised to empower youth across Lakes state during 2010 Sudan general election campaign. In recent clashes in Cueibet County, the Governor told the youth to reconcile their differences and join the state government in building a better state based on peace and hope.

Rumbek North commissioner calls for peace conference

The Commissioner of Rumbek North County of Lakes State, Stephen Mathiang Deng Monydit, has called upon UN Agencies and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan to support the upcoming inter-state peace conference. Lakes and Warrap States have traded raids and counter raids over cattle in recent years.

Speaking to press in Rumbek, Mathiang the commissioner of Rumbek North (Maper) County called upon youth leaders of neighbouring Warrap to work to live peacefully with their Lakes State counterparts by holding a reconciliation conference.

He asked the United Nations Mission in South Sudan to support the initiative and for other medical and safe drinking water to be provided to the local population.

Disarmament

This will be the second inter-state peace conference between Warrap and Lakes State. The first conference was held in May 2011 in Wunlit located in the Eastern part of Warrap State. Mathiang noted that youth across his county had rearmed themselves to such an extent that he feared for the safety of citizens as he feared the police would be outgunned.

“Now youth have rearmed themselves heavily. This is difficult stage to be [dealt with] by police because youth armed themselves beyond police capacity” said Mathiang.

Lakes State has experienced cattle raids and road robbery in last year. Mathiang called upon non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to adopt preaching peace in their program.

“I need all UN counterparts to involve preaching peace in their program - we can bring peace if all agencies and government daily tell story of peace to people of Lakes state”, he said.

The Commissioner of Cueibet County of Lakes state Isaac Mayom Malek, also said that he county will join the inter-state peace conference but accused some politicians of having a hand in the in-sighting the violence between the two states causing instability.

This upcoming inter-state peace conference will be attended by Warrap State counties that border neighbouring Lakes state. Lakes State's Rumbek North and Cueibet will participate.

Lakes state's Youth Union Leader, Apuk Deng Reech denied allegation leveled against youth by the Rumbek North County commissioner that youth have rearmed themselves.

Reech said that "youth in Rumbek North County were disarmed and now youth are powerless to defend themselves in case of any attack" . He urged the state government and county authorities to ensure the protection of citizens in fully fulfill by government who disarmed civilians.

"It is now government's duty to protect those civilians whose their arms were disarmed by government troops level few month ago" he said.

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