

Ramciel is the best place for the capital city of South Sudan!

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By Matot Akech Matot

December 4, 2012 - South Sudan has just celebrated the first anniversary of our being a new country. After many years of terrible pain and suffering, we triumphed over our enemies. We fought bravely for so many years and were rewarded with success at last. South Sudan Oyee

One of the many tragic outcomes of the years of war was the untimely death of our beloved Dr. John Garang who died in a helicopter accident. This was and still is a terrible blow to our young nation, but we kept going forward. We knew that John Garang would want us to keep heading towards the life of success that he and many others sacrificed their lives to achieve.

Some of you will say, when they read my letter - "What is wrong with Matot? Where are the words against his opposition? Why is he not shouting and crying about some of the foolish, unintelligent letters going around about Ramciel and Juba? Why is he calm and making good sense? "

I have decided not to spend a lot of time talking about the recent, foolish letter from Dr Luka Biang Deng, published in the Nation Newspaper this month. In his letter, Mr Luka says that Juba should stay as the capital city of South Sudan. And why? What is his reasoning? Because Juba is there. Because Juba has been the capital for some time now. And then he says, because Dr John Garang is buried there. Yes, our leader is buried there but on its own, this is not a good reason for having Juba as the capital. There are not real points in these words. John Garang said we will "take the town to the people" and not the other way around. So he is saying let us build new towns, and Ramciel was one place suggested.

In fact, all of Luka Biang Deng's points are easy-to-beat arguments. John Garang himself did not want Juba to be our capital. With his intelligence, John Garang knew that Juba would not be the best capital city that we can have. Just because something is there already is not a convincing argument. We do not have to accept it.

I have another much better idea. All my arguments add up to my saying Ramciel is the best place for a capital and Juba is not good as a capital of our glorious new country.

Juba does not and will never suit the numbers of people, the size, the numbers of buildings, the necessary infrastructure, the numbers of workers, international tourists and Investors that South Sudan needs to become a strong independent country.

It is not good enough to say that Juba should be the capital because it was already there. The small city existed and we used it as a place to sit and think and plan for the good future of our country. Since our Independence, Juba has seen all of the first days and struggles of this new nation. A lot of new business and overseas people are now coming to South Sudan, wanting to bring investment in business and where do they stay? Juba, a city that is too small, where the indigenous peoples of this place do not want anyone to come and where it is impossible develop Juba into a great city of the world.

Juba actually is land belonging to the Bari tribe and their people do not want the capital city to keep growing over their ancestral lands. This has been a cause of violence. The indigenous people do not want their land taken for a capital city. Were the Bari people asked at all by anyone about building a capital city right on their lands? Did someone ask their permission to do this? I do not think so. Juba was there, had some services and so it grew.

Now Juba is not coping well with being the capital city. The roads are narrow and cars rush through them, often knocking down the people on foot and killing them. As well, there is not a satisfactory water supply and waste disposal pipes and treatment plants. Houses are just put anywhere and this looks very untidy and not permanent. Roads are too narrow. Juba is very close to the borders of Kenya and Uganda.

In Juba, there is not enough land to cover the 31 or so square kilometres (about 12 square miles) needed for the construction of new government buildings in the present capital city. Since the time Juba has been the "stand-in" for our capital city, Juba has grown and grown without planning. Juba was never meant to be a capital city for the whole country. Since that time, Juba has grown buildings and roads which are not suited to large numbers of people who have come there.

Dr. John Garang commissioned a study and the area of Ramciel was suggested as a good place for a new capital city. John Garang wanted Ramciel as a capital, but he died before this was accomplished. It is in The Lakes State of greater Yirol people, Even the name "Ramciel" is suitable, because it means where the Rhino meet and it can be now refer as a centre of ten state of South Sudan "town between". A shared area, a place for different people to come together and meet. Ramciel is the areas of Awen (Thian) Malek payam of Langmatot Boma. It is more in the centre of the country; at its heart. For the people of all

South Sudan it gives a central focal point. It is an area where not many people have lived before. It is not putting buildings on top of family areas and graves.

Ramciel is inhabited by the Awen clan from Ciec, members of Yirol. Ramciel is their land. These are the indigenous people of this place and they must decide. They have said yes to building Ramciel. Now they have to decide which of 2 possible areas they will move to, take their cattle to and stay in.

The Ramciel area is used by three Greater Yirol communities: Ciec, Aliab and Atut. They understand that the Government of South Sudan has a right to develop land so as to benefit all our citizens. Ramciel has good hills where the city could be developed. There is plenty of space in the hills for a large city.

There are several international examples of a country building a new separate City for their capital. I can talk about Brazilian and Canberra, in Australia, as two examples. There are a tremendous lot of positive reasons for South Sudan building a new capital. The indigenous people of that area will not behave in a violent manner if Ramciel was made into the capital.

The opportunity to build a truly well planned capital should not be ignored. South Sudan needs to build our democracy and part of that building is making a beautiful capital city where our leaders will meet and make important decisions concerning our future. We want a capital city to be proud of. Roads and buildings would be properly planned, with water and waste systems, hospitals and schools included. We would showcase our abilities in designing a capital which would reflect our beloved, great country.

On April 5, 2012, the survey for the proposed new capital of South Sudan, Ramciel, was reported in the Sudan Tribune and in other papers. The survey will be completed within the next six months, reports the official in charge of the project.

This gives us, as proud citizens of the new country of South Sudan, a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to design a city built for a purpose: to be the centre of the life for our country. In an age where effects on the natural environment are serious issues, South Sudan can employ the best possible environmentally aware architects and road planners. In this way, South Sudan can show the rest of the world that we are good global citizens. We have suffered and lost so much, but now we are starting to say "Look at us. We are building our nation in the best possible way.

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