



SSHURSA condemns shutdown of Good News Radio calls on National Government to reverse the Lakes State's Government decision on the Station and urges the institutions to respect rule of law

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The South Sudan Human Rights Society for Advocacy (SSHURSA) in strongest terms possible condemns the shutdown of the Catholic Radio, the Good News Radio by the South Sudan's Lakes State Government. The Minister of Information and Communications of the Lakes State Government Mr. Dut Makoi Kuok, at about 1:00 PM of June 28, 2013, had shut down the Lakes State's Rumbek capital based Good News Radio. According to the verifiable information SSHURSA has collected, the Minister advanced more than four reasons which later amounted to the shutdown of the station. Some of such reasons as alleged by the Minister including; that the Radio station has been a channel for collecting human rights abuses in Lakes State and that the programs and activities at the station have been politicized.

Analysing these reasons, in the eyes of South Sudan's laws, they remain as mere speculations and concoctions of the Minister, whether he acted upon directives of the Caretaker Governor of Lakes State as alleged or by his own accord; the Minister attacked the heart of the South Sudan's Constitution. He has misused his powers without enabling law to act otherwise and he thus acted outside his mandate. This must be condemned by anyone who cares about South Sudan's current and future democratic and rule of law based governance.

Based on the Provisions of the Transitional Constitution of South Sudan 2011, the Constitution which defines the limits of the government powers, allows for the right to freedom of expression and media.

Article 24(1) States;

"Every citizen shall have the right to the freedom of expression, reception and dissemination of information, publication, and access to the press without prejudice to public order, safety or morals as prescribed by law".

The Minister has failed to show if any breach has been committed by the Good News Radio Station but rather using his powers to do anything that pleases his government which is contrary to the spirit of the Constitution and that amounts to a defilement of the supreme law.

Article 24(2) of the TCSS states;

“All levels of government shall guarantee the freedom of the press and other media as shall be regulated by the law in a democratic Society”

The Lakes State’s Minister of Information and Communications never cared to respect this provision of the Constitution but rather acted in a manner always typical of a military dictatorship. This is unacceptable after South Sudan sacrificed millions of lives to gain its freedom from oppressors. The Minister’s act of closure of the radio is illegal and a reminder to South Sudanese of Khartoum’s oppression and Military dictatorships on South Sudanese over the last decades. The constant intimidations and harrasments of media personnel and human rights defenders by the Lakes State government officials and other state institutions in South Sudan must be a concern of all humanity.

Article 19 of the 1948 UN’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights allows for the right to freedom of expression. South Sudan being a member of UN and owing its obligations to the world under International Law oughts to respect the provisions of the Declaration but this hasn’t been happening.

SSHURSA has also learnt that the Station Manager Mr. Peter Mapuor Makur is under pressure to leave his job. As SSHURSA condemns the unconstitutional acts of the Lakes State government, it recommends the following:

To the National Minister of Information and Broadcasting Co-operation and National Council of Ministers:

- (1) Intervene in the issue and direct the Lakes State Minister of Information and Communication and the Caretaker Governor to reinstate the Good News Radio Station immediately.
- (2) Urge the caretaker Governor to act within the confines, spirit and letter of the Constitution
- (3) Urg the National Minister of Justice and Judiciary’s Constitutional Court to protect against the open abuse of the Constitution by the Lakes States Government.

To the National Legislative Assembly:

- (1) Summon and question the Lakes State Caretake Governor Major General Matur Chut Dhuol, on the human rights abuses that have been taking place in Lakes State since his leadershi started.
- (2) Make immediate demand from Lakes State Caretaker Governor and Minister who effected the illegal act to reinstate the operations of the Good News Radio.

To the Top Management of the Good News Radio and Media Practitioners:

- (1) Remain courageous and never yield to the intimidations by the state
- (2) Resist all temptations, never to submit to illegal acts pressured by the state
- (3) Urge the media personnel to continue acting responsibly within the limits of the law

Signed by:

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