



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY HON. WILLIAM
SAMOEI RUTO, PhD, C.G.H., PRESIDENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF KENYA AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF
THE DEFENCE FORCES, DURING THE AU-C5 PLUS
SUMMIT**

FEBRUARY 15, 2026

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

**Excellencies,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,**

1. I express my appreciation to my brother, His Excellency Cyril Ramaphosa, President of the Republic of South Africa, for convening this timely summit, which underscores our collective commitment to the cause of peace and stability in South Sudan.
2. I further commend the AU-C5 for its sustained support to the IGAD-led South Sudan peace process.

Excellencies,

3. This meeting takes place at a critical juncture for South Sudan as the country faces a humanitarian emergency, persistent insecurity, and political uncertainty. The twice-extended transitional period under the 2018 Revitalised Peace Agreement is approaching its conclusion, with general elections expected by the end of 2026.
4. This pivotal moment calls for renewed focus, collective resolve, strengthened partnerships, and sustained vigilance by all stakeholders to ensure that the next phase of South Sudan's political transition is firmly anchored in peace, inclusivity, and stability.
5. At the request of His Excellency Salva Kiir Mayardit, President of the Republic of South Sudan, Kenya convened the Tumaini Initiative in Nairobi in May 2024 to facilitate the inclusion of hold-out groups that did not initially sign the 2018 Peace Agreement.



By August 2024, the parties had reached an agreement on eight Tumaini Protocols.

6. On 6 November, 2024, President Kiir and I issued a joint communiqué underscoring the need to expedite the talks and to consider anchoring the Tumaini Initiative within the IGAD framework to ensure regional alignment and coherence.
7. Regrettably, the mediation process was interrupted in February 2025 following new demands and an adjournment requested by the Government of South Sudan delegation.
8. The principal lesson arising from the Tumaini Initiative, and from current developments more broadly, is the urgent need for a robust and inclusive dialogue involving all relevant parties, including hold-out groups and those excluded from the Revitalised Transitional Government of National Unity, in order to resolve outstanding issues under the Revitalised Agreement and advance critical transitional milestones.

Excellencies,

9. The year 2026 presents both opportunity and risk for South Sudan. The opportunity lies in the planned conclusion of the transition through elections scheduled for December. However, key pre-conditions, including a sustainable ceasefire, humanitarian access and assistance, civilian protection, confidence-building measures, constitutional review, and a national census, remain incomplete.



This raises legitimate concerns regarding the credibility and integrity of the anticipated electoral process.

10. Our deliberations at this summit should therefore remain firmly focused on the shared objective of supporting a peaceful and successful conclusion of the transition period, culminating in the conduct of genuine and credible elections.
11. In light of the urgency of the situation, I wish to propose the following measures, which could provide a clear and structured pathway forward:
 - A. Immediate cessation of hostilities; release of political detainees; strengthened civilian protection; and the provision of urgent humanitarian access and assistance;
 - B. Establishment of an IGAD Sub-Committee of Heads of State and Government on South Sudan, comprising frontline states and working in coordination with the AU-C5, to provide sustained political oversight and strategic guidance to the peace process;
 - C. Establishment of an IGAD Ministerial Sub-Committee on South Sudan, in coordination with the AU-C5 and the IGAD Secretariat, to monitor progress and provide regular implementation reports;
 - D. A call upon regional and international partners to provide technical support and predictable financing mechanisms to facilitate completion of the peace process;



E. The convening, under IGAD leadership and in coordination with the AU-C5 and international partners, of an inclusive high-level dialogue bringing together South Sudanese party leaders and key stakeholders to build consensus on the critical issues necessary to advance the transition.

Excellencies,

12. This summit provides an important diplomatic opportunity to harmonise all South Sudan peace initiatives within a unified regional framework. Aligning the Tumaini Initiative under IGAD and AU auspices would consolidate mediation authority, prevent process duplication, and reinforce collective guarantorship.
13. Such coordinated architecture would send a clear signal that completion of the transition must proceed through inclusive, regionally endorsed, and credible mechanisms.
14. The proposed High-Level Dialogue must be inclusive, pragmatic, and conducted in good faith by all South Sudanese stakeholders. It should move away from adversarial posturing and zero-sum bargaining toward a people-centred approach.
15. All participants should refrain from advancing narrow partisan, sectarian, or ethnic interests and instead give priority to the supreme interests of the people of South Sudan.

I thank you.

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