

Dinka-Nuer West Bank Peace and Reconciliation Conference

Wunlit, Bahr el Ghazal, Sudan

27 February - 8 March 1999

A decade has elapsed since the Dinka-Nuer Peace and reconciliation Conference convened at Wunlit town during the period from 27 February to 8 March 1999. The Resolutions and agreement concluded at the conference continue to be invoked as a model for peace and reconciliation agreements for coexistence between the peoples and tribes of the Sudan. Perhaps, it could be further stretched to embrace other cultures that witness similar conflicts, worldwide. Now, a conference for peaceful coexistence between Dinka Malual and the Messirryia tribes was held during the period from 14 to 18 November 2008 at Aweil town. This event proves, beyond any doubt, that such conferences that directly involve representatives of the concerned tribes from amongst the chiefs, dignitaries, men and women young and old, could establish a solid ground for a genuine dialogue between neighboring people and tribes, thus, laying the foundation for sustainable peace between them.

Dinka-Nuer Peace and Reconciliation Conference; A historical perspective:

In June, 1998, and by initiation of the New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC), a number of tribal chiefs of border areas between the Dinka and the Nuer, together with a number of church representatives from areas on the two banks of the river Nile, have met at the Kenyan town of Louky. The meeting deliberated on the best ways for restoring peace to the area and reaching reconciliation between the two parties at war for solid seven years. The participants in that meeting have agreed to hold a series of peace conferences between the two tribes and the west bank conference came as result.

The team that undertook the task of the preparation and organization of the Dinka-Nuer peace and reconciliation conference included the organizing committee; representatives of women and the youth; representatives of the tribal chiefs; representatives of the SPLM and southern intellectual living abroad. The conference convened on 17th of February and ended on 8th of March 1999 by signing the Wunlit Dinka-Nuer Peace and Reconciliation Agreement which contained the resolutions arrived at by the conference. . The conference has received positive responses within and outside the Sudan; aroused great interest in the international media; amongst peace and co-existence researchers and is welcomed by the international community.

While now the political and human situation is increasingly deteriorating in Darfur, the government of the Sudan proves to be terribly inept and powerless as far as exerting real efforts to put an end to the conflict in the region. It lacks commitment to the peace agreement already arrived at with other factions. Within this context such an agreement for peaceful co-existence between tribes and peoples of the Sudan stands as a model to be followed either with regard to Darfur or any other region that witnesses conflicts or regions that might witness conflicts in the future. It is now possible for tribal representatives; civic society organizations and peace advocates within the international community to join forces for entrenching sustainable peace and reconciliation between the tribes and peoples of Darfur and of the whole of the Sudan, for that matter.

The Editorial Committee of RESPECT

The following pages present the documents of the Dinka-Nuer peace and reconciliation conference, which include:

- Dink-Nuer agreement, Western bank peace and reconciliation conference, Wunlit town, Bahr Al-Ghazal, Sudan 27 feb-8 March 2008.
- The West Bank Dinka-Nuer Peace and conference resolutions reconciliation conference, Wunlit town, Bahr Al-Ghazal, Sudan 27 feb-8 March 2008.



Wunlit Dinka Nuer Covenant
Dinka-Nuer West Bank Peace and Reconciliation Conference

Wunlit, Bahr el Ghazal, Sudan
27 February - 8 March 1999

Dinka and Nuer Chiefs, church, civil and community leaders, elders, women and youth have met in a peace and reconciliation meeting in Wunlit, Bahr el Ghazal, Sudan under the auspices of the New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC). We have established this Covenant of peace and reconciliation and declare an end to seven and a half years of intense conflict.

We the participants hereby make and adopt the following Covenant and pledge ourselves to observe and implement it scrupulously and conscientiously in keeping with the solemn vows of peace, reconciliation and familial co-existence. We initiated our Conference with the sacrifice of the White Bull (*Mabior Thon / Tu-bor*) and have sealed the Covenant in Christian worship and traditional sacrifice.

We declare the following:

- All hostile acts shall cease between Dinka and Nuer whether between their respective military forces or armed civilians. A permanent cease-fire is hereby declared between the Dinka and Nuer people with immediate effect.
- Amnesty is hereby declared for all offences against people and property committed prior to 1/1/99 involving Dinka and Nuer on the West Bank of the Nile River.
- Freedom of movement is affirmed and inter-communal commerce, trade, development and services are encouraged.
- Local cross-border agreements and arrangements are encouraged and shall be respected.
- It is hereby declared that border grazing lands and fishing grounds shall be available immediately as shared resources.
- Displaced communities are encouraged to return to their original homes and rebuild relationships with their neighbours.
- The spirit of peace and reconciliation this Covenant represents must be extended to all of southern Sudan.

All Resolutions adopted by the Conference are hereby incorporated into this Covenant.

We appeal to the SPLM/A and the UDSF/SSDF to endorse, embrace and assist in implementation of this Covenant and its Resolutions.

We appeal to the International Community to endorse, embrace and assist in implementation of this Covenant and its Resolutions.

Official version: 10th March 1999



Resolutions

Dinka-Nuer West Bank Peace and Reconciliation Conference

Wunlit, Bahr el Ghazal, Sudan

27th February to 8th March, 1999

Process used at Wunlit Dinka-Nuer Conference to develop Resolutions: The following process was used to identify issues and develop resolutions that address the issues and provide solutions for the identified problems:

- **Storytelling and Issue Identification:** A little more than a full day was given to Dinka to tell their stories to the Nuer and to surface the issues that were outstanding between Dinka and Nuer. This was followed by a similar amount of time for story telling by the Nuer, including their responses to what had been said by the Dinka. Finally a day was given for dialogue and rebuttal, comments from key border chiefs, and observations from chiefs who had come as observers from the east bank of the Nile River. The three and a half days of speaking generated a list of issues and a number of proposals for solutions.
- **Management Team Synthesis of Issues:** The Conference Management Team developed a list of six major categories that had arisen out of the storytelling. Rapporteurs were assigned for each group. The categories and Rapporteurs were:
 1. Missing Persons and Marriages to Abductees (Mr. Dhol Acuil Aleu)
 2. Reclaiming the Land and Rebuilding Relationships (Dr. Peter Nyot Kok; Rev. Matthew Mathiang Deang)
 3. Institutional Arrangements (Dr. Wal Duany)
 4. Monitoring the Borders (Mr. Telar Deng)
 5. People Outside the Peace Process (Mr. Farouk Gatkuoth Kam)
 6. Extending the Peace to the East Bank of the Nile and Equatoria (Mr. John Luk Jok)
- **Working Groups:** Six working groups were established with each one focused on a single issue category. It was decided that the groups would work only in the Dinka and Nuer languages or Arabic where needed. English translation would not be provided for observers because of the amount of time that would be lost in an additional translation. The six issue areas were explained to the conference delegates and they were encouraged to choose the area of their greatest interest. There were thirty to sixty people in each working group. The groups worked for half a day to develop their proposals.
- **Plenary Presentations and Consensus Approval:** Each working group presented its proposals through its Rapporteur. Discussion was held, additions and amendments were made and each set of recommendations were adopted when consensus was gained.

I. Resolutions Regarding: Missing Persons and Marriages to Abductees

A. Girls who have been abducted but are not yet married.



1. Shall be repatriated to their parents/relatives as soon as they are identified.

B. Girls who have been Married in Captivity

1. As soon as they are identified they shall be asked by their parents/relatives if they want to remain with their husbands.
 2. If a woman declares that she wants to remain with her husband, than the bride wealth must be collected and presented to her parents/relatives.
 3. If she desires to return to her parents/relatives she is to be repatriated.
 4. If there are children of the marriage, the natural father may choose to redeem the children according to Dinka/Nuer traditions.
 5. If the father refuses to redeem the children, the mother is free to leave with them.
 6. If a woman is married to or held by a soldier on the SPLA side, a letter should be sent to Commander Salva Kiir Mayardit, Chief of General Staff of SPLA, so that the girl is able to state before her parents/relatives whether she wants to remain with her soldier-husband or return to her family. If a woman is married to or held by a soldier on the UDSF side, a letter should be sent to Commander Elijah Hon Tap, Chief of Staff of SSDF, so that the girl is able to state before her parents/relatives whether she wants to remain with her soldier-husband or return to her family.
- If she wants to return to her parents, then she must go.
 - Whether she has a single child or several the natural father may choose to redeem the children, according to the custom of the Dinka/Nuer.
 - If the father refuses to redeem the children, the mother is free to leave with them.

C. Married Women Abducted into Captivity

1. As soon as a woman in this category is identified she should be repatriated to her home area with all her children born in captivity.

D. Boys or Men in Captivity.

1. In all cases boys and men who have been abducted and held in captivity shall be freed and repatriated to their natural parents or guardians as soon as they are discovered.
2. A man who has been provided a wife by his captor must be asked where he himself wants to live. If he chooses to return to live with his parents/relatives, then his family shall pay the bride wealth which was paid by his captor.
3. If his father/relatives pay the bride wealth on his behalf, then he is free to return to his land of origin with his children and wife.

E. Boys or Men who were abducted, then freed, and have settled on their own accord.

1. This group shall be left undisturbed wherever they are found. (Cases regarding minors shall be handled according to Dinka/Nuer customary law.)

F. Creation of Abductee Identification Teams



1. On both Dinka and Nuer sides an Abductee Identification Team shall be formed made up of chiefs. The two teams shall work together, accompanying each other on tours of both Dinka and Nuer territories.

II. Resolutions Regarding: Reclaiming the Land and Rebuilding Relationships

(A provisional list was developed of villages and settlements that have been abandoned due to the Dinka-Nuer conflict during the past seven and a half years and should be considered for reconstruction. The Covenant encourages displaced communities to return to their original homes and rebuild relationships with their neighbours. The provisional list includes the names of more than 400 villages and settlements in **Appendix A.**)

A. Formation of a Technical and Planning Committee on Land Settlement and Reclamation responsible for:

1. Advising on consolidation and relocation of villages and stations.
2. Advising on linking villages and settlements to productive areas, introduction of ox ploughing, provision of bore wells, medical care, and veterinary services. Promotion of joint Dinka-Nuer cattle and commodity markets.

A. Affirm Freedom of Movement in Peace and Security

1. We propose a market based near the border where Dinka and Nuer can trade together, with all benefiting from the diversity of items and wealth we will be able to share together.

A. Promotion of Dinka-Nuer Reconciliation and Familial Co-Existence.

1. Establishment of a Dinka-Nuer Veterinary Centre to be jointly shared by Dinka and Nuer. This is to encourage a common concern for animal health as a vested interest which needs to be protected.
2. Establishment of Dinka-Nuer co-operatives in agricultural and commercial fields.
3. Establishment of a model Dinka-Nuer Primary School near the border, with both Dinka and Nuer students enrolled.
4. Produce a unified Re-statement of Dinka and Nuer Customary Law to assist the local courts, law enforcement and administrative officials.
5. Establish an annual award that shall be conferred by the Council upon those who are proficient in both Dinka and Nuer languages.

III. Resolutions Regarding: Institutional Arrangements

A. Police*



(*The list of border stations or police posts found in this section and the list in section IV will be finalised in a meeting of the Peace Council in Ganyiel in November 1999. Between March and November 1999 the counties and provinces will work to harmonise the two lists.)

1. Bahr el Ghazal Region shall have the following police posts:

1. Adior
1. Pagrau
1. Luel
1. Madol
1. Makuac
1. Meshra Acol
1. Majak Juer
1. Mayen Jur
1. Mayom Adony
1. Mathiang

2. Unity State shall have corresponding posts as follows:

1. Dhiau Rid
1. Jerweng
1. Mayom
1. Kaikon
1. Tar
1. Madol
1. Lony
1. Porjuer
1. Luel



1. Majok
1. Rialthiang
1. Tangyier
1. Riak

3. The composition of the force command and other provisions shall include:

- arms & ammunitions
- uniforms
- stationery
- transport
- radio communication sets
- medicines
- rations
- training

1. Joint police forces shall be formed during the dry season in the areas of contact. This will assist in areas where conflict has arisen over grazing lands. A Joint Police force from both Unity State and Bahr el Ghazal will work together in the grazing and fishing areas during the dry season.

A. The Border Courts

1. We recommend the revival and strengthening of existing border courts as well as training of para-legals to man the courts.
2. Re-affirm the present border chiefs and increase their numbers when necessary.
3. Border courts constituted in Bahr el Ghazal and Unity states shall consist of 5 to 7 members each.
4. Pending further arrangements the law applicable in both courts shall be customary law.
5. Convicts on either side shall be imprisoned where the offence was committed and shall be treated in accordance with international human rights norms.

C. Appeal Processes

1. Border courts shall be courts of original jurisdiction except in capital offences. (Capital offences go directly to the county or province judge.)
2. Appeals from border courts shall lie to the relevant peoples' regional court .
3. Appeals from the peoples' regional court shall lie to the county judge or province judge as the case may be.

A. Dinka-Nuer Peace Council



1. Composition: Three members, one of whom shall be a woman, shall be chosen by each county/province.
2. The Council shall meet twice a year and may meet upon the emergency call of the chairperson.
3. The Council shall elect its chairperson at its first meeting and this person shall serve in this office for a period of one year with effect from the date of his/her election.
4. The venue for the meetings shall alternate dependent on the security situation.
5. The Functions of the Council.
 - To oversee the implementation of the Wunlit Dinka-Nuer Covenant and Resolutions.
 - A budget shall be considered and prepared by each of the respective administrations. In addition the council is urged to consider ways to involve the local communities in supporting these structures ourselves.
 - The council is also authorised to raise funds through appeals to international and indigenous NGOs.
 - Review annual performance and recommend future plans.
 - Recommend a larger forum or meeting between Dinka/Nuer chiefs, elders and political leaders in the event of serious violations of the Covenant and Resolutions.
 - The Council shall maintain contacts with the political leadership on security issues.

IV. Resolutions Regarding: Monitoring the Borders

- A. Border stations or posts for the purpose of monitoring the peace shall be established at the following locations. ***

(*The list of border stations or police posts found in this section and the list in section IV will be finalised in a meeting of the Peace Council in Ganyliel in November 1999. Between March and November 1999 the counties and provinces will work to harmonised the two lists.)

NUER DISTRICTS:

Nyal District

Luony Madub

Pabwong Kau Akon

Ador District

Papui Pakam Alothai

Yian Manyiel



Jagei District

Bilnyang Dol

DINKA Districts:

Yirol District

Adhel Muoth Nyibor

Karer

Gogrial District:

Majok Mading

Matiel Ayan

Wathtong Atemrot

Rumbek County:

Amokpiny Apac

Malek Madol

Tonj County:

Makwac Adel Pagor

Paweng Meshra

Akop Athieng Ruol

Majak Juer Acier Cok

Mangar Deng Kwal Aru

B. Each district is to have a radio, totalling 9 radios

- 5 of these are for Bahr el Ghazal
- 4 are for Western Upper Nile. (This does not include the Bul section since they were not present. Additional radios may be needed in the future.)

A. Stations will be manned by police and border chiefs.

- B. **Disarmament:** As peace comes to an area, all citizens holding firearms are either to be disarmed or join the army. The local civilian militia are called *Jiec-nin-bor* in Nuer, or *Gelweng* in Dinka. The unanimous decision was that once peace is established there



would be no need for these. Both Dinka and Nuer agree that these are a source of insecurity at the border, and a source of insecurity internally. The disarmament process is to be done in three stages:

- All armed civilian forces are to immediately come under the discipline of the military forces in each area;
- Firearms held by civilians shall be registered according to chieftainships;
- As peace comes to an area, arms are to be stored in local armouries under the control of the local authorities.

V. Resolutions Regarding: People Outside the Peace Process

- A. The concerned authorities of the Conference, Dinka and Nuer, are to disseminate the Covenant and Resolutions of the Conference in their areas with the assistance of the local authorities and the New Sudan Council of Churches.**
- B. The Conference calls on Kerubino Kuanyin Bol and Paulino Matip Nhial to join the peace and reconciliation process and embrace the Wunlit Dinka-Nuer Covenant and Resolutions.**
- C. The Conference calls on Dr. Riek Machar and the peace-loving people of Upper Nile to use their influence to bring Kerubino Kuanyin Bol and Paulino Matip Nhial to the peace process.**
- D. The Conference makes the following recommendations:**
 - 1. A letter shall be written to Dr. John Garang and Riek Machar urging them to resolve their differences and embrace and promote the peace and reconciliation process.
 - 2. Once the conflicting communities in the south are reconciled, it is recommended that an inclusive peace and reconciliation conference be organised among southern political leaders.
 - 3. The Conference extends its gratitude to the NSCC for facilitating this important conference, and to the SPLM/SPLA for allowing this conference in Tonj County and for providing adequate security. Our gratitude also goes to the UDSF for having confidence in the security arrangements made by SPLA and for allowing delegates from UDSF controlled areas.

VI. Resolutions Regarding: Extending the Peace to the East Bank of the Nile and Equatoria

A. "Why do we want to extend this peace to the other side?"

- 1. The Dinka and Nuer of the East Bank of the Nile are equally in conflict as are those on the West side of the Nile.
- 2. We need peace for the entire South so that all can live in harmony.



B. The conflicts to be addressed in the East Bank are:

- Nuer-Dinka Bor
- Murle-Nuer and Murle- Dinka Bor
- Murle-Anyua
- Nuer-Shilluk
- Lou Nuer-Gaawar Nuer

C. The conflicts to be addressed in Equatoria are:

- Taposa - Didinga
- Didinga-Displaced Nilotics
- Taposa-Murle
- Jee-Murle
- Mandari-Dinka Bor
- Boya-Taposa

D. Recommended Mechanisms or modalities for taking this peace to the East Bank

1. Holding a peace conference on the East Bank among the Nuer, Dinka Bor, Murle, Shilluk, and Anyua.
2. Holding a mini-peace and reconciliation conference among the Lou and Gaawar Nuer.
3. Holding a peace and reconciliation conference in Equatoria to resolve conflicts.
4. Holding a general peace conference for south Sudan.
5. Form a peace enlightenment committee to explain the Wunlit Dinka-Nuer Covenant and Resolutions and educate the people on the peace process.
6. Copies of the Wunlit Dinka-Nuer Covenant and Resolutions should be widely disseminated to all communities and regions of the south as well as the Diaspora.

E. Participants in these conferences will be similar to what was done in Wunlit:

1. Chiefs
2. Women
3. Church leaders
4. Elders
5. Representatives from the SPLM and the USDF
6. Members of self-organised ethnic militia
7. Traditional spiritual leaders
8. Observers from Bahr el Ghazal and Western Upper Nile
9. Intellectuals from the Diaspora

F. These conferences shall be organised by:

1. NSCC
2. USDF
3. SPLM
4. Community Leaders and chiefs
5. Women's Leaders



6. Youth

F. Roles for each group

1. NSCC

- Fundraising and Co-ordination
- Logistics
- Prayer
- Transport of delegates to the venue

2. UDSF will ensure the security of the East Bank Conference

3. SPLA will co-ordinate with the NSCC and UDSF concerning security and transport of delegates from its area to the Conference site.

4. Chiefs and Community Leaders

- Building of Conference accommodation
- Contribute cattle and foodstuffs locally available
- Mobilise and inform the local population concerning peace and reconciliation

2. Women

- As organised by local women's associations

2. Venue and Date Options:

- Venue options: Akobo, Waat, Ayod
- Date options: To be decided by participants

2. Other Peace and Reconciliation Conferences

- **Mini-Conference for Lou & Gaawar**, proposed for April
- **Peace Conference in Equatoria.** After holding the major conference in the East Bank a second major Conference should be prepared in Equatoria.
- **All South Inclusive Conference.** This largest and most inclusive gathering shall follow the Conference in Equatoria, and will include representatives from all areas of the South: Equatoria, Bahr el Ghazal, and Upper Nile. It will encompass not only the grassroots civilian population (as the Wunlit conference) but also political and other leaders. All groups, of every persuasion and faction will meet in an atmosphere of great flexibility. All participants will be entitled to speak and contribute freely.

