

September 28, 2020

**H.E. Gen. Salva Kiir Mayardit;
President of the Republic of South Sudan
Juba, South Sudan**

**RE: DOES TABAN DENG GAI DESERVE TO BE A VICE PRESIDENT? A
LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN**

Your Excellency:

PREAMBLE

We the undersigned current and former government officials; intellectuals, and community as well as business leaders from Ruweng Administrative Area (RAA);

Steadfastly supportive of Your Excellency's leadership in light of Your Excellency's composure, and ability to hold our country together;

Mindful of Your Excellency's historical sacrifice for the liberation of this country;

Grateful for Your Excellency's support for the people of Ruweng throughout your professional career and leadership;

Appreciative of Your Excellency's bold decision to establish Ruweng as an administrative area, a decision that is now viciously fought against by enemies of peace, extremists and groups that seek to undermine, oppress and dominate the people of Ruweng due to lack of Ruweng's representation in positions of influence and power in the Government;

Requesting Your Excellency to appoint strong and loyal Ruweng leaders to be part of the corridors of power where decisions are made concerning our great Republic;

Concerned about the notorious schemes and games that VP Taban Deng Gai has played since 1991, and especially from 2005, with the view to marginalizing and alienating Ruweng from the gains of our hard-won independence;

Cognizant of the fact that VP Taban Deng Gai, along with Minister Chiengjiek and other enemies of Ruweng have been inciting the IO integrated military officers (such as Brig. General John Koch, Maj. General Karlo Kuol and Maj. General Musa Malek, among others) to continually unleash violence on and displace Ruweng people from their native land so that they can occupy it by settling his own constituents and annex it to his home area;

Convinced VP Taban Deng Gai, along with his loyalists such as Minister Chiengjiek, is an existential threat to the Ruweng people by reason of their adverse position and unwavering determination to exterminate the Ruweng people and confiscate their land;

Aware that our security concerns do not come to Your Excellency's attention nor get to Your Excellency's office desk because of the ill-will and pretentious behavior of actors in Your Excellency's cabinet who hold themselves out as protectors of Ruweng interests yet they are, in fact, playing to the tune of VP Taban's extremism and his destructive agenda against the people of Ruweng;

Conscious of the fact that VP Taban Deng Gai has consistently abused the power of his political office by intimidating, targeting, bullying and silencing our representatives who stand up against his unconscionable behavior and betrayal of public trust, which betrayal has potential to bring the Presidency into a terrible disrepute;

Calling into question Taban's loyalty in light of his suspicious conduct, including his maintenance of a separate; private militia and a network of loyal former IO military officers such as Maj. Gen. Karlo Kuol (currently the Deputy Commander of the Division 4 Infantry), and Brig. Gen. John Koch (who is now the head of SSPDF Brigade One in Ruweng where he is implementing Taban's harmful interests against the Ruweng people);

Recalling that VP Taban Deng Gai has established a network of military officers in Ruweng where he has recruited and commissioned into South Sudan Police Service and National Security Service more than 100 loyal civilians whom he has promoted to varying ranks, ranging from major generals to 2nd lieutenants, with an intent to protect his harmful interests;

and

Underscoring that Taban has used and continues to use his ill-gotten wealth and resources to divide and pit the people of Ruweng against one another with impunity;

do hereby submit this petition to Your Excellency, wondering whether VP Taban Deng Gai—a man with a questionable moral character and loyalty, a man notoriously known for betrayals, power abuse, maiming civilians, land grabbing and a threat to the political, socio-cultural cohesion of the people of this country—deserves to be a vice president in a country whose liberation the Ruweng people have made immense sacrifices.

SUBSTANTIVE BASIS FOR THE PETITION

Your Excellency know full well that the Ruweng people are your loyal subjects who, as always, are ready, willing and able to standby you in thick and thin, just as they did during the liberation struggle and in the most recent history. Yet, in view of our strong belief that Vice President Taban Deng Gai:

(a) in collaboration with many forces within and outside the government, has become an existential threat to the Ruweng people,
(b) increasingly poses a serious national security threat to our Republic for whose birth Your Excellency and the Ruweng people sacrificed to liberate while Taban was on the other side; our affirmative question as to whether VP Taban deserves to be a vice president is premised on, but not limited to, the following perspectives:

(a) Abuse of Public Trust/Power and Resources

It is a well-documented fact that VP Taban Deng Gai is a man who uses his political power to injure, undermine or even destroy communities and individuals. He thrives and flourishes on chaos by setting communities and individuals against one another. His nefarious approach to power and politics has been well noted even internationally. In order to advance his vicious intentions, VP Taban uses his ill-gotten wealth and resources to bribe, divide and conquer. That is how he has used this wealth to destroy Ruweng by using his forces to kill innocent civilians, by commandeering our land and stationing an army in the heart of Ruweng. He pays this private army from this wealth which he, to once again emphasize, accumulated through grand scale thievery and corrupt dealings. He also uses the same wealth to target and kill Ruweng intellectuals and politicians.

For instance, when he was the Governor of Unity State under Bashir (from 1999-2001), he schemed to target Ruweng and supported several raids carried out by the Sudanese Government. Furthermore, while he was the Governor of Unity State (2005-2013), one prominent Ruweng Member of Parliament, Hon. Zechariah Bol

Deng, was targeted and killed. Hon. Bol was an SPLA veteran. He fought for the liberation of this country, from 1984 to 2005. His death was blamed on none other than VP Taban himself.

As we speak, VP Taban Deng Gai continues to egregiously abuse the power of his office as a vice president. He uses the power of this office to threaten, intimidate, bully and silence Ruweng representatives who stand up against his amoral behavior that includes violations of the human rights of the Ruweng people. The most recent lawsuit against Hon. Mary Ayen Majok¹ (in which he uses public resources to pay an army of lawyers) is intended to achieve just that. We, however, hasten to add that a threat or a lawsuit against Hon. Ayen because she speaks out against Taban's vile activities is a threat or lawsuit against the Ruweng people as a whole.

VP Taban's consistent abuse and misuse of political power and office as well as siphoning of public resources to advance his personal and ethnic interests is clearly a trait unbecoming a vice president. It is our considered opinion that this behavior makes him unfit to be a vice president. It paints adversely not only the meaning of public service but it is also more likely to bring the Presidency into a terrible disrepute.

(b) VP Taban Unduly Interferes in the Ruweng People's Internal Affairs

Another substantive basis for this petition is that VP Taban has unconscionably ordained himself the master of Ruweng people's administrative and other internal affairs. This self-aggrandizement compels him to meddle in the affairs of Ruweng in the most egregious way possible. For instance, Taban has made it his divine duty to appoint leaders for Ruweng. In so doing, he willfully chooses to appoint morally incompetent and unqualified governors, county commissioners, chief administrators and police officers. He also influences the appointments of military commanders and National Security personnel operating in the Ruweng region. That is why we have the likes of Brig. John Koch, a well-known notorious killer, now leading Division 4 Infantry Brigade in Ruweng. Koch was imprisoned by Gen. Puljang for repeatedly attacking and killing Ruweng people in Biemnhom but that behavior made him more attractive to Taban who invited to join his militia. VP Taban latter promoted him among his militia forces to the rank of brigadier general.

Obviously, there is nothing under the laws of this country that entitles a vice president to determine leadership in a particular constituency. The Constitution and

¹ Hon. Ayen is the Chairperson of the Decentralized Governance and State Affairs at the Council of States in which she represents the Ruweng Administrative Area.

laws of this country are very clear. A vice president is an assistant to the President and can only do what either the law prescribes for him or Your Excellency assigns him to do. Yet Taban, a perpetual traitor against the interest of this Republic in general and of the Ruweng people in particular, thinks that he can determine who Ruweng leaders are or must be.

Your Excellency, if you may well recall, when Ruweng was in the thick and thin of the liberation, VP Taban was on the other side of the conflict, siding basically with Khartoum. He fought the people of Ruweng and South Sudan as a whole. Under his reign as the Governor of Unity State under Bashir, for example, Taban oversaw the launching of 27 military raids against Ruweng between the periods of 1999 and 2001. We, therefore, see no basis for why VP Taban should exercise dominion over the brave, resilient and loyal Ruweng people. He does not even deserve to be a vice president if a reward for sacrifice and contributions to the cause of the people of this country means anything. Currently, he has extended his subversive activities to the current Governor of Unity State, Hon. Dr. Joseph Nguen Monyтуil. This is part of his constant efforts to undermine any peaceful coexistence and cooperation between RAA and Unity State.

(c) Taban Undermines any Cooperation Between Ruweng and “New Unity” State Under Dr. Joseph Nguen

VP Taban has been engaging in various subversive activities not only against the interests of Ruweng but also against the leadership of “New Unity” State under Gov. Joseph Nguen Monyтуil. In his most recent meeting with the current Ruweng Chief Administrator, Chol Awanlith, Taban, along with Minister Chiengjiek and Them Machar Kuol, hatched a destructive policy that calls for non-cooperation with Gov. Nguen. The trio (Taban, Chiengjiek and Them) instructed the Chief not to cooperate with Gov. Nguen under any circumstances. In their view, Gov. Nguen is an enemy, being too cooperative with Your Excellency. It was also in the same meeting that the trio instructed the Chief not to deploy any police force in Ruweng areas bordering “New Unity” State. The prime objective is to undermine the leadership of both areas as well as make the border region unstable and ungovernable.

(d) Taban Maintains a Separate Militia with Which He Terrorizes the Ruweng Region and Exacts Concessions from the Government

Since Taban ostensibly joined the Government in 2016, pretentiously to secure the return of the Nuer to the Government or, at least, or turn the Nuer against Riek Machar, he has continued to maintain a separate military wing of his own. These forces are stationed both in the Ruweng area of Wanhedanlwel (Munga) and his home area of **Guit County**. At Wanhedanlwel, this militia unit is not only an

occupying force in Ruweng Administrative Area. They are there for him to use as a bargaining chip so as to exact concessions from the Government to keep his position. Even military officers who appear to have been integrated into the SSPDF, following his ascension to power in 2016, continue to maintain strong loyalty to him. When Maj. Gen. Karlo Kuol lashed out against Your Excellency in Ruweng this year, lambasting your bold decision to create RAA, he was not speaking on his own accord. He spoke for VP Taban Deng Gai and other sworn enemies of the Ruweng people.

Again, the fact that Taban continues to maintain a separate armed wing is no coincidence. He wants to use this force as a tool for his power bargain. Yet the fact is that Taban actually has no political constituency and can be discarded inconsequentially. This is evidenced by the fact that he has never visited and cannot pay a visit to his hometown, since he returned from rebellion.

Most of the forces that often raid Ruweng areas such as was the case recently in Wakyar, Biu, Agarak, Akot, Athony, and Yaar, are part of this militia unit. As we speak, eight (8) soldiers from this private army/militia are in jail in Ruweng, having been captured in a direct battle with Ruweng youths. Among them, one is a major, another is a captain and two others yet are 1st lieutenants. In fact, all the eight soldiers, except one, are officers. They are part of Taban's terrorizing unit.

It is worth reminding Your Excellency that Taban was not only the mastermind and architect of the 2013 coup. He continues to be a serious national security threat to this country. Such a man, Your Excellency, cannot be honored with the esteemed office of vice presidency or trusted with the affairs of our Republic. Your Excellency may recall how a delegation from the Sudan in 2017 was so gracious to Taban claiming that had it not been for VP Taban Deng Gai, Panthou would have never been part of the Sudan today. Taban, therefore, not only betrays the people of Ruweng. He poses a very serious national security threat to this country.

(e) Taban Brazenly Displays Disloyalty and Wanton Disregard for Your Excellency's Authority

Despite his countless personal limitations, VP Taban Deng Gai is an overly ambitious man. He feigns loyalty to Your Excellency. In reality, however, Taban continues to both stab you in the back and talk ill of Your Excellency's leadership. In other words, Taban displays wanton disregard for Your Excellency's authority and leadership, just as he stabbed the SPLM in the back in the 1990s or betrayed Your Excellency's trust in 2013. Taban has been doing exactly the same to Your Excellency since he became the First Vice President in 2016 and now as a vice

president since 2020. This behavior is consistent with his Pagak declaration that the only way by which IO could defeat Your Excellency and the Government was to join the rank and file of the Government, and then bite, rock and sink the boat from within. The point is that Taban is a man who does not have allegiance to anyone.

This explains why Taban brazenly defies and disregards Your Excellency's executive decrees or orders. For instance, when Your Excellency resolved in a meeting between two governors of the defunct Northern Liech and Ruweng States and ordered them to evacuate from Ruweng areas of Wanhedanlwel (Munga), Miadiing (Lalob) and Darbim (Unity Oilfields) late last year, Taban ironically did the opposite. He subsequently flooded his military loyalists with cash, giving each of his tiny Jikany tribesmen and militia millions of pounds to set up settlements in those Ruweng areas, especially at Wanhedanlwel (Munga). He also maintains a militia that he pays to protect Jikany civilians in the occupied Ruweng areas. Only the former Ruweng State Governor, Laurence Mabok Wuor, obeyed the instructions. This clearly shows that Taban does not respect the authority of Your Excellency's office as President of the Republic.

(f) Taban is an Insubordinate and Dishonorable Political Figure

Your Excellency, the deceitful display of disloyalty, discord sowing and capricious behavior exhibited by VP Taban Deng Gai is not limited to negating the interest of the Ruweng people and their right to exist. All South Sudanese, IGAD countries and, indeed, the entire continent of Africa can clearly attest to not only Taban's incompetent leadership but also his dishonorable behavior. For instance, between 2016 and 2020, a time during which he served as First Vice President after taking up the leadership of SPLM/A-IO:

- (1) Taban politically failed to unite his SPLM-IO faction, leaving IO militias everywhere in the bushes of South Sudan despite his pledge that he was going to outplay Riek and bring all former supporters of Riek to the Government fold. More specifically, Taban failed to convince and unite his tribesmen (who made up 90% of the SPLM/A- IO);
- (2) Upon taking over the leadership of the SPLM-IO, he embarked on the politics of destruction that he is so adept at. This kind of politics is harmful to the people of South Sudan. With those of Taban in the driver's seat, South Sudan will never be able to build a strong and viable country. We are, therefore, wondering whether VP Taban deserves to be a vice president. But the ultimate judgment is entirely Your Excellency's. The fact is that, in light of the fact VP Taban makes immoral decisions and violates human rights of our own

citizens and yet goes around the world to attribute them to Your Excellency, he remains insubordinate and disdainful of Your Excellency's authority, An individual who defies instructions of a higher authority or makes lapses of judgement that he or she attributes to his or her boss is characteristically insubordinate. These traits succinctly describe who Taban Deng Gai truly is.

(g) A Concise Summary of Why Taban is not a Trustworthy Person

While the litany of Taban's moral and political incompetence or failing is inexhaustible, the following are illustrative of his shady background and, thus, explain why he is not morally and politically fit to serve as a vice President:

- (1) Taban is a mischievous sycophant of the first order. He knows how to sweet-talk leaders by neatly displaying an appearance of or saying exactly what a leader wants. But beneath all that thinly veiled pretensions, he is brutal and dangerous because he stabs the very leader that he appears to be loyal to in the back. That is exactly how he pretentiously made himself closer to Chairman Garang and to Your Excellency, especially between 2005 and 2013;
- (2) Taban is a perpetual betrayer. He was the first of the Nasir Coup Group to visit Khartoum in 1991 in preparation for what eventuated in the August 28 Coup, in 1991. He betrayed not only the SPLM/A but the very Garang that he ostensibly cultivated a working relationship with;
- (3) Taban betrayed Matip Nhial in 2001. Once the Nasir Coup Group became part of the National Islamic Front Government in Khartoum, he betrayed Matip Nhial. The confrontation that would ensue led to the killing and wounding of several Ruweng politicians in Bentiu, because Taban associated them with Matip.
- (4) Taban betrayed Riek in 2001. When Riek Machar sent Taban from Khartoum to negotiate on his behalf with the SPLM/A under Chairman Garang, he immediately jumped ship on his arrival in Nairobi and betrayed Riek Machar by rejoining SPLM/A in Nairobi. He subsequently badmouthed Riek;
- (5) Taban Betrayed Your Excellency while he was Governor of Unity State during which he pretended to be loyal to Your Excellency. In reality, he was not. He was only your friend during the day but was Riek Machar's friend at night. That is how he easily hatched the 2013 Coup, along with his boss with whom he had a real and tangible pre-existing relationship. Despite the fact that Taban might have lost 2010 SPLM elections, Your Excellency still maintained him as SPLM's gubernatorial flagbearer. The people of Ruweng voted for him overwhelmingly in the general elections that would follow in 2010 even when he actually lost in Nuer's constituencies;

- (6) When left unchecked, Taban usurps powers by assigning to himself extraordinary authority. For instance, as Governor of Unity State, Taban unilaterally signed a clandestine agreement with Gov. Haruun of Kordofan in 2008. In that agreement, Taban conceded Ruweng areas of Roorelou (Kharsanaa), Koleleg (Keilek) and other areas. By so doing, Taban made himself too powerful that he decided to act unilaterally—without consultations. Yet the authority to concede a country's or an autonomous region's territorial integrity lies even beyond presidency. He betrayed Your Excellency.
- (7) Hatched the 2013 Rebellion: When Taban was removed as Governor of Unity State in 2013, he started going around the country and the world, accusing Your Excellency of tribalism despite the fact that he was replaced with a man from his ethnic background. He ultimately conspired with others to engineer the 2013 Coup.
- (8) Taban is not only corrupt but is also an underachiever: Taban presided over 2% share of oil revenues of Unity State between 2005 to 2013 but had nothing to show for it. Under his reign as governor for 7 years, the Old Unity State remained one of the most underdeveloped. This clearly shows that not only does Taban make bold promises that he can never fulfil. He is totally incompetent. He is an underachiever in all practical respects.
- (9) Taban is not a Member of SPLM: Since 2017, Taban has been pretending that he joined the SPLM but in reality, he has not. Here is why:
- a. Taban has been openly requesting a proportional share of leadership. That is how he got himself two cabinet positions and himself.
 - b. He also recently requested 10% share of the Government's slots in the RTNLA for the same reason.
 - c. In the current TNLA, he still maintains his party structures including a Chief Whip for IO;
 - d. He still holds himself out as a partner, not an appointee, in the ITGONU of the RTGONU. Yet, IN 2016, he became the FVP on account of the pledge that he was going to bring the rebellion generally and Riek specifically under control. But did he fulfill his pledge? Besides, if he has joined the SPLM, then one should wonder why he still is:
 - i. mobilizing not only his own forces but also some of the old SPLM/A cadres currently in the army, the police, and National Security Service forces;
 - ii. Keeping his separate army; and,
 - iii. using his ill-gotten resources to bribe people and asking them to pledge loyalty and allegiance to him.

So, construed, Your Excellency can see that VP Taban has sinister motives and interests, a plan that he intends to pursue with all necessary force.

CONCLUSION

Against the foregoing, we submit this humble petition wondering whether, at Your Excellency's convenience, Taban Deng Gai deserves to be part of the Presidency. We are of the view that his presence in the Presidency does not only undermine the right of the Ruweng people to exist. His enduring abuse of political power, betrayal of the public trust bestowed upon him by virtue of office as a vice president, among others, have the potential to bring the presidency and Your Excellency's leadership into a terrible disrepute. Besides, Taban poses a serious security threat to the future of this Republic. To save this Republic from his headache and embarrassment we wonder if he should be part of the Presidency. Finally, if we live in a country in which personal history and contributions or lack thereof are imperatives of determining leadership, then it is our considered opinion that VP Taban, Your Excellency, does not deserve to be honored with a vice presidential position. But the ultimate determination is Your Excellency's sole discretion.

End

Signed by:

1. Hon. Lawrence Mabok Wuor, former Governor, Ruweng State
2. Hon. Mayol Kur, former Governor, Ruweng State
3. Hon Theji d'Aduod, former Appeal Court Judge & Governor, Ruweng State
4. Hon. Mabek Lang, former Deputy Governor, Unity and Ruweng State
5. Hon Mary Ayen Majok, Chairperson on Decentralized Governance and State Affairs, CS
6. Hon Chol Deng Akiir, Former Speaker of State Assembly, Ruweng State
7. Hon Gal Deng Alaak, former Commissioner, Biemnhom County
8. Hon. Sultan Bol Maayik, Former Advisor Ruweng Administrative Area
9. Hon Ajang Gede, former Minister of Information, Ruweng State
10. Hon Morris Bol Majok, Former Minister, Ruweng State
11. Hon Hang Manyiel, former Minister, Ruweng State
12. Hon. Simon Chol Malith, former Minister, Ruweng Sate
13. Hon. Peter Dau Chopkuer, former D/Governor, defunct Ruweng State
14. Hon. Miyar Lueth, MP representing Ruweng in Abyei Administrative Area

15. Hon. Ehesan Madari
16. Hon. Michael Mialek Yak, former commissioner, Abiemnom East
17. Hon. Miarial Minyiel- former Commissioner, Abiemnom West County
18. Dr. Santino Ayuel Longar, Assist. Professor, University of Juba
19. Eng. Paul Adong, Chairman and CEO, Private Enterprise
20. Simon Lueth Tor, Chairman and CEO, Private Enterprise, Juba
21. George Malou, Youth Representative, Juba
22. Nyok Malek, Youth Representative, Juba
23. Dhieu Achigak, Lawyer and Youth representative, Juba
24. Monyluak Mijak Arop, Panaruu Community Leader in Canada
25. Abraham Gak Monyabur, Canada
26. Santino Kudpul Dau, Canada
27. Sarah Alweeldid Thon, Canada
28. Paulino Mathiang Wuor, Canada
29. Julia Achol Mun, Canada
30. Rose Adol Ngor, Canada
31. Elizabeth Ayar Deng, Canada
32. Kur Mijak Toor, Canada
33. Dan Atok Baguoot, Juba
34. Michael Malek Yak, Former Commissioner, Biemnhom County
35. Miarial Minyiel Deng, former Commissioner, Biemnhom County
36. Hon. Miyar Lueth Aguer, Councilor, Ruweng representative in Abyei
37. Hon. Kiir Minyiel, former MP, defunct Ruweng State
38. Kiir Miyom Kiir, USA
39. Wien Mirial Ador, Australia
40. Santino Aniek Akol, USA
41. Daniel Chol Dau, Australia
42. Miabil Minyiel Aguer, USA
43. Piok Wuor Michar, USA
44. Isaac Mayok Kur, USA
45. Gabriel Monytiok Dau, USA
46. Luka Miaper Buga, Chairman of Panaruu Community, USA
47. Diar Dong Akiir, USA
48. Peter Miakwei Kwol, USA
49. Mayiig Deng Kiir, USA
50. James Arob Mijag, USA
51. Monyluag Deng Kur, USA
52. Abood Toor Abood, USA
53. Miarial Miabek Amaal, USA
54. James Miyom Nuul