



# SOUTH SUDAN DOCTORS' UNION

*The National Secretariat*

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Juba, 28 July 2021

## **STATEMENT ON THE DEATH OF DR. DOMINIC PITIA IN AKOBO**

The South Sudan Doctors' Union (SSDU) is saddened and shocked by the loss of another medical doctor under unclear circumstances. Late Dr. Dominic Pitia, who worked for Care International as Emergency Health Manager in Akobo was found dead in his room on Tuesday, 27 July 2021. The SSDU extends its sympathy and condolences to the family and relatives for the untimely demise of Dr. Dominic Pitia. Akobo community and people of South Sudan will dearly miss Dr. Pitia and his services.

As we mourn the loss of our colleague, the entire medical fraternity is still in disbelief and speculation regarding the circumstances around his death. The SSDU is calling on the Jonglei State authorities, particularly the State Police Commissioner to send an independent investigation team to Akobo to investigate the circumstances and cause of death of Dr. Dominic Pitia.

In the same vein, The South Sudan Doctors Union urges the Unity State government to make public the outcome of investigation into the killing of Dr. Louis Edward on May 21, 2021. According to the Government Statement Ref.: RSS/MoCA/OM/1/J/MOH/J- dated 14 June 2021, *"the Governor of Unity State is directed to deploy all the security organs in the area [Ganyiel] to arrest the lead culprits and cohorts and conduct comprehensive investigation of the incident and engage the civil prosecutor in Unity State to assess the case and direct the same to appropriate level of court."* With recent change in leadership, it is our expectation that the new Commissioner of Panyijiar has been cooperating with investigation teams sent to Ganyiel by the national and state governments.

Protection of health workers is a direct responsibility of state authorities and community leaders. Repeated killing or mistreatment of health workers will affect availability of health professionals to provide health services to communities in the remote areas where there is no proper law enforcement and access to justice.

The SSDU is therefore, calling on youth groups, community leaders and local authorities in County, Payams and Bomas to look after and protect health workers serving their people. Failure to do so will have serious consequences on the lives of women, children and the elderly who need medical services most.

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