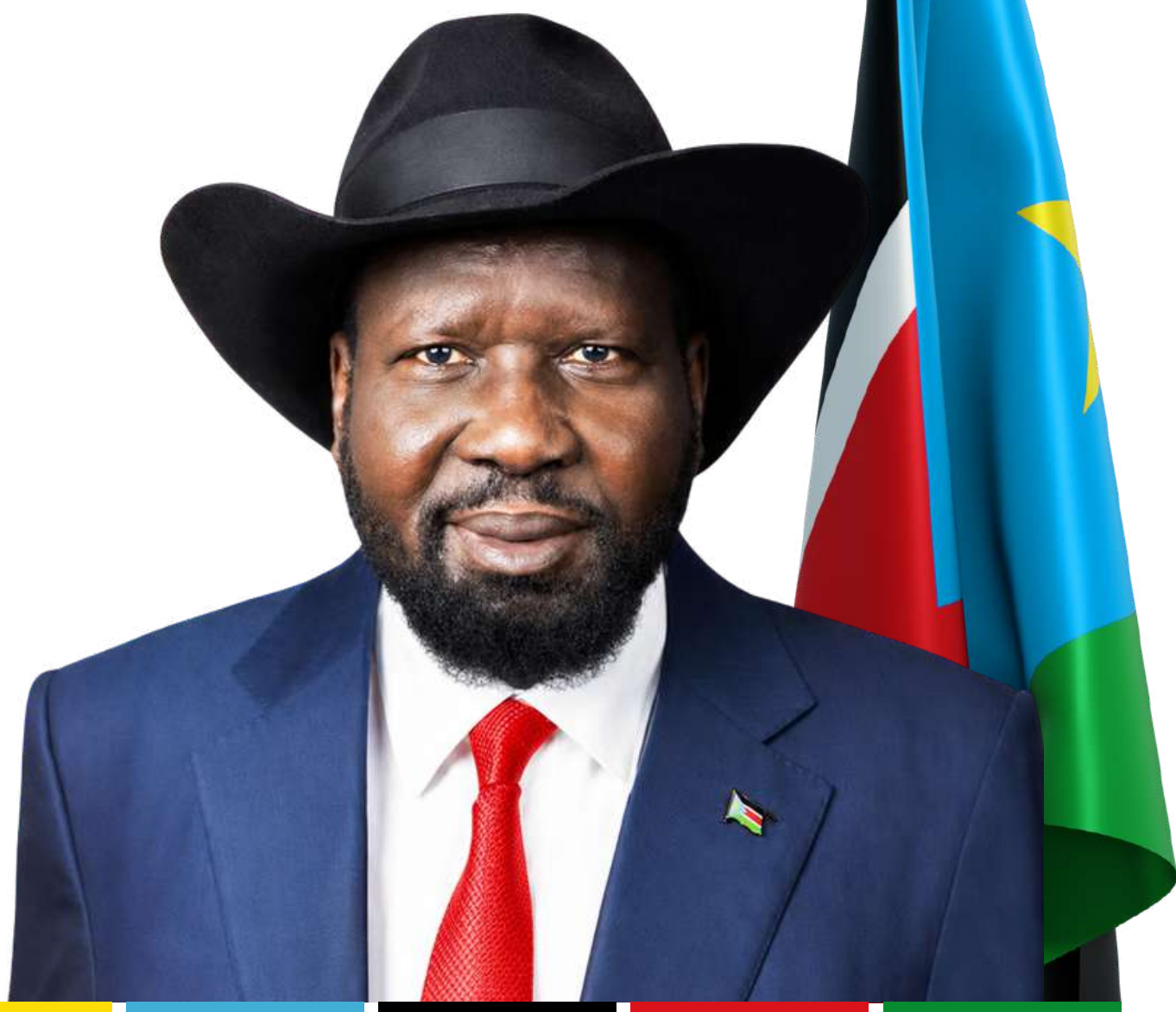


REPORT FELT AFRICA ELECTION READINESS TRAINING

For: SPLM & GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATORS

 Juba, South Sudan



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Between **23 and 26 July 2026**, **FELT Africa Group** delivered a four-day **Election Readiness Media Training** in Juba, convened by the **Ministry of Presidential Affairs** ahead of the **Republic of South Sudan's** first general election as a sovereign nation, scheduled for 22 December 2026.

More than one hundred (> 100) communicators from the **SPLM Party** press units; the **Presidency**; **Ministerial Offices**; **State Governors'** offices; **Envoys and Advisors'** teams across South Sudan's states; and the **South Sudan Broadcasting Corporation** were trained across **9 substantive sessions** covering:

- Strategic messaging,
- Election law,
- Digital campaign strategy,
- Election-day reporting,
- Disinformation management,
- Crisis communication, and
- National reputation.

The programme was anchored by **Hon. Arek Ajou Aldo Deng**, Press Secretary at the Office of the President, whose session delivered the Presidency's authoritative brief on **H.E. President Salva Kiir Mayardit's** record and the approved language for the national narrative, and was opened and closed with direct engagement from the Deputy Minister of Information, Cde. Hon. David Yau Yau; the SPLM Secretary General, Cde. Dr. Akol Paul Koordit; and the Managing Director of the South Sudan Media Authority, Hon. Ajou Luol Akuei.

Participant feedback, collected through **Slido** (a feedback technology software utilised by FELT Africa in the trainings we conduct) across all 4 days, confirms the programme's effectiveness. Of the **seventy (70)** participants who rated the training on a scale of 1 to 5, **4.5** was the average score. **73%** gave the training the top **rating of 5**, and a further **16%** rated it **4**. As such, **89%** of all respondents rated their experience a **4 or 5 out of 5**.

4.5

average score
70 respondents · scale of 1-5



89%

rated 4 or 5

Quiz assessments administered during the sessions showed **strong retention of the core frameworks taught: 88% of participants** correctly identified the approved framing for South Sudan's election story, and **70% correctly applied** both the digital messaging discipline and the election-day deployment principle taught in their respective sessions.



approved framing for
South Sudan's story



digital messaging discipline



election-day deployment
principle

INTRODUCTION

The FELT Africa Election Readiness Media Training was conducted in Juba, South Sudan, from 23 to 26 July 2026, under the auspices of the Ministry of Presidential Affairs. The training convened SPLM communicators and State Government communicators for a structured 4-day capacity-building programme addressing strategic messaging, media-handling skills, crisis communication, digital campaign management, and election-specific communications protocols, with a focus on the preparation for the general elections scheduled for 22 December 2026, and with a view to robust and dynamic **capacity building going forward thereafter**.

The programme was delivered to 2 cohorts: SPLM party press units and political messaging teams on Days One and Two, and State Government communications personnel drawn from the Presidency, ministerial offices, governors' offices, and advisors' teams across states on Days 3 and 4. FELT Africa Group deployed its full delivery team to Juba to conduct the training on-site.

The curriculum comprised 2 integrated components: the development of core government communications competencies, and the consolidation of a unified command of President Kiir's record and national agenda. The 2 components were designed to function together, equipping participants with both the skills to communicate and the substantive content required to do so effectively.



WHY FELT AFRICA

FELT Africa was not brought into this engagement as a generic training vendor. The firm sits, deliberately, across four connected practices: government and public sector advisory, public affairs and government relations, political strategy and electoral communications, and professional communications training, built specifically for engagements that sit at the intersection of governance, politics, and media, exactly the terrain this programme had to cover in a single four-day curriculum.

Few firms in the region are structured to move fluidly across all four areas at once, because few firms have leadership with lived experience in all four.

That lived experience is the firm's real differentiator. Dennis Onsarigo served as Press Secretary for a presidential campaign through one of Kenya's highest-stakes electoral periods, and has held communications leadership inside two county governments. Diana Ngao directed communications for a presidential running mate through the same 2022 election cycle, and has led a governor's press service. Chaka Sichangi is an Advocate of the High Court of Kenya who has advised at the level of a State House policy unit. James Njoroge has worked as a political communications consultant inside South Sudan. Mbugua Ng'ang'a has sat atop Kenya's largest newsroom through multiple general elections. None of this team learned election communications from a manual. They have each run it, under real pressure, inside real institutions, in the same region South Sudan sits in.

That regional grounding matters as much as the individual expertise. Kenya's multiparty electoral communications environment is among the most tested on the continent, and it was FELT's own leadership operating inside that environment that shaped the frameworks this programme delivered. What participants received on the misinformation and disinformation distinction, the crisis command chain, the Fact Sandwich, and message discipline under pressure was translated from lived Kenyan electoral experience directly into the South Sudanese context by people equipped to make that translation accurately.

That combination, regional origin, senior lived experience across government, party, and newsroom, is what the Ministry of Presidential Affairs was engaging when it brought FELT Africa to Juba.

The objectives that follow are what that combination was tasked to deliver.



PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES

Every objective in this programme sits on top of a single conviction that anchors all of FELT Africa's government, public affairs, and political communications work: that every national is already an agent of their country's story, whether they hold a title or not, and that the discipline of communicating well is really the discipline of holding that agency with pride, evidence, and consistency rather than defending an institution from the outside.

As such, this training helped more than a hundred people recognise the agency they already carried, government official, party communicator, or journalist alike, and to arm that agency with the skills and content to be exercised well. The objectives below were built with that philosophy underneath them

- Equip participants with a commanding knowledge of President Kiir's record, his role in the peace process, his government's development achievements, and his agenda for South Sudan's future, so that every communicator across the government and party speaks from a unified, authoritative, and well-evidenced brief, not as an instruction handed down, but as a story they carry with ownership.
- Build strategic messaging competence, ensuring that participants understand how to develop, package, and deliver messages that cut through in contested media environments, and that they do so as authors of the national narrative rather than as its passive transmitters.
- Develop spokesperson and media-handling skills, including interview technique, press briefing management, and managing hostile or adversarial questioning, so that every communicator, regardless of rank, can hold their ground as a credible national voice.
- Strengthen crisis communications capability, equipping participants with frameworks for managing reputational threats, controlling the narrative under pressure, and coordinating the government's response to breaking adverse coverage, from a position of ownership rather than defensiveness.
- Build social media management proficiency, covering platform strategy, content discipline, managing online attacks, and using digital channels to project the President's agenda effectively, extending national agency into the spaces where South Sudan's story is now most contested.
- Establish election-specific communications protocols, covering campaign-period messaging, managing results communications, and coordinating the government's communications during the most sensitive phases of the electoral calendar, treating the election itself as the clearest test of a nation authoring its own story.
- Create a unified communications cadre across the government and party, with shared language, shared frameworks, and a shared commitment to projecting South Sudan's narrative and President Kiir's leadership with consistency and confidence, built on the understanding that before any office, every participant in that room is a national first.

RATIONALE

This capacity-building programme was designed to equip government and party communicators with the skills, tools, and content knowledge required to project President Salva Kiir Mayardit's message with force, consistency, and discipline ahead of South Sudan's general elections on 22 December 2026.

The December 2026 elections represent the most consequential political event in South Sudan's history, and one accompanied by significant communications risk. The prevailing international media environment is highly active, and the narratives that gain traction during the election cycle will materially influence how South Sudan is perceived by regional partners, development partners, and the international community.

President Kiir's record, including the signing of the Revitalised Peace Agreement, the commitment to elections, the maintenance of the national unity framework, and the advancement of the country's development agenda, warrants consistent and confident communication.

Effective communication of this record depends on the capacity of every press officer, spokesperson, social media manager, and communications official across government and party structures. Inconsistent messaging or avoidable error on the part of individual communicators risks fracturing the broader national narrative.

This programme was established to address that risk by building a unified, skilled, and well-briefed communications capacity able to project President Kiir's message with consistent authority from Juba to the governors' offices across all ten states.



FACILITATORS

The training was delivered by a team combining FELT Africa's own senior leadership with the direct participation of the Office of the President and the South Sudan Media Authority.

Each facilitator's session was assigned based on specific, lived expertise, and the short profiles below set out why each was the right person to lead the ground they covered.

Dennis Onsarigo | Group Chairman, FELT Africa

Facilitator, Statecraft, Narrative Control, Crisis Management and Election Communications



Dennis Onsarigo built his career at the intersection of journalism and political power.

He spent over a decade in newsrooms, rising from a cameraman at Nation Media Group to running the Investigations Desk at Standard Media Group's KTN, where he launched Kenya's first television crime series, Case Files, and the investigative series The Lead.

He then crossed into government and campaign leadership: Director of Communications for the County Government of Taita Taveta, Chief of Staff for the County Government of Nyamira, and Press Secretary for the Azimio La Umoja presidential campaign during Kenya's 2022 general election, where he led national messaging, rapid response, and crisis communication through one of the country's most contested electoral periods.

This is precisely the terrain his session covered: holding a unified national narrative under real pressure, running a crisis command chain, and briefing international press without losing message discipline.

Participants were trained by someone who has done this from inside a live presidential campaign war room, not from theory. His session gave South Sudan's communicators a tested playbook for the exact scenarios, viral rumour, hostile press conference, contested results, that Kenya's own recent elections have already forced into the open.

Diana Ngao | Managing Director, FELT Africa

Facilitator: Strategic Messaging: Setting the Agenda and Holding the Message Before Elections



Diana Ngao led communications and public relations for Hon. Martha Karua and Hon. Raila Odinga during Kenya's 2022 presidential campaign, directing national and international media engagement and message positioning within one of the most closely watched electoral environments on the continent.

She has also served as Director of the Governor's Press Service for the County Government of Mombasa.

In 2025, she led FELT Africa's government-commissioned nationwide training programme for radio hosts on professional conduct during politically polarised periods, work that sharpened her focus on the exact discipline required to hold a message steady when public discourse is volatile.

That combination, having set and held a national message inside a real presidential race, and having taught other communicators to do the same under political pressure, is why she opened the programme with Strategic Messaging.

Participants left the session not with abstract theory on agenda-setting, but with a message architecture and a five-step pressure-response framework drawn directly from a campaign environment as consequential as South Sudan's own.

Chaka Sichangi | Director - Policy, Law and Research, FELT Africa

Facilitator: (1) The Elections, the Law, and the Nation; Country Framing & (2) Ceeng, Dheng, and the Good Name of South Sudan



Chaka Sichangi is an Advocate of the High Court of Kenya with postgraduate legal training from the University of Kent, City University of London, and SOAS, University of London.

He has advised at the highest levels of government policy, including consulting for Kenya's State House Policy Unit and contributing to a State House Aggregation Unit providing technical assistance directly to the Presidency, and was selected to facilitate a nationally commissioned training for radio hosts on the legal boundaries and misinformation risks of broadcasting during politically polarised periods.

His dual grounding in constitutional and media law, paired with hands-on experience advising government at the executive level, is what allowed him to walk participants through the legal architecture of South Sudan's own election, from defamation law to the Cybercrimes and Computer Misuse Act, with the authority of someone who has done this work inside government, not only studied it.

Participants gained a working legal literacy that lets them report and communicate with confidence rather than fear of overstepping a line they cannot see.

James Njoroge | Digital Political Comms Strategist, FELT Africa

Facilitator: Social Media Strategy and Digital Campaign Communications



James Njoroge has spent recent years working as a communications consultant inside senior political offices in South Sudan's government, managing digital strategy, content, and online reputation for high-profile principals operating in exactly the kind of high-protocol, high-scrutiny environment this training was designed to prepare communicators for.

He combines that with direct Kenyan electoral experience, having led social media strategy and content operations for a 2022 presidential running mate across a full general election cycle, and with over 7 years running his own digital agency, giving him command of both political communications and the technical mechanics of platform strategy, content systems, and responsible use of emerging tools like AI.

Few facilitators in the region can speak to South Sudan's specific digital and political communications environment from lived, inside experience the way James can.

That is what made his session more than a generic social media training: participants received a digital campaign framework built with direct awareness of the country's own political communications terrain, its platform landscape, its risks, and its opportunities, ahead of a general election where the digital battlefield will matter as much as the physical one.

Mbugua Ng'ang'a | Lead Media Trainer, FELT Africa

Facilitator: (1) Election Day Communication and Reporting; & (2) Managing Disinformation and Hostile Media Coverage



Mbugua Ng'ang'a is Editor-in-Chief of the Nairobi Law Monthly and the Nairobi Business Monthly, with a 25-year journalism career that has taken him through Deputy Managing Editor of the Daily Nation, Editor of the Saturday Nation, Managing Editor of the Business Daily, and Acting Group Managing Editor at Nation Media Group, Kenya's largest media house.

He has sat in the editor's chair through multiple Kenyan general elections, 2007, 2013, 2017, and 2022 among them, and has studied adaptive leadership at the Harvard Kennedy School and cross-media management at Germany's International Institute of Journalism.

This session focused That is a rare vantage point: someone who has personally run newsroom election-day deployment, made the split-second editorial calls on what to verify and what to hold, and steered coverage through Kenya's own periods of post-election tension. Participants trained under him for both election-day reporting and disinformation management were learning from a person who has lived the exact decisions their newsrooms will face on 22 December, not a trainer reciting best practice from the outside. on strengthening the ability of radio presenters to clearly distinguish between facts, opinions, and analysis while broadcasting in politically and socially polarized environments.

Hon. Amb. Arek Ajou Aldo Deng I Press Secretary, Office of the President, Republic of South Sudan

Facilitator: Commanding the Narrative - Understanding and Communicating H.E. the President's Record



Hon. Amb. Arek Deng is the sitting Press Secretary at the Office of the President of the Republic of South Sudan, having previously served as Deputy Press Secretary supporting the administration's communications strategy and coordination of national programmes.

Her career spans over two decades of governance and systems-change leadership, including heading South Sudan's first dedicated Government Delivery, Accountability and Efficiency Unit, and strategic communication and speechwriting sit among her named core areas of expertise.

She is, quite simply, the institutional custodian of President Kiir's record and voice, the person whose office is charged with deciding what may be said about the Presidency and how.

That is precisely why no one else could have anchored Commanding the Narrative.

Participants did not receive a secondhand summary of the President's approved messaging; they received it directly from the office that authors it, with the authority to answer, in real time, the questions about access, accreditation, and approved language that only that office can settle.

Marko Deng Wal I Media Coordinator, Presidential Press Unit, Republic of South Sudan



Marko closed out every session across all four days with a translation of its key takeaways into Arabic.

Several participants in the room worked primarily in Arabic rather than English, and a training built to produce a single, unified national voice cannot claim to have done so if part of the room only half understood what was said.

Marko's translations meant that every framework, every legal distinction, and every piece of the President's approved record landed with equal clarity regardless of which language a participant carried into the room, and it gave direct, practical form to a principle Hon. David Yau Yau himself set on Day One: that a message which cannot be heard by every South Sudanese has no place in the campaign at all.

DELIVERY TEAM

FELT Africa

Alongside its core delivery team, FELT Africa deliberately **engaged 4 South Sudanese professionals**.

Embedding local professionals into the delivery of a training this politically sensitive meant the team documenting, producing content around, and hosting the programme understood South Sudan's institutions, protocol, and context from the inside, not as visiting observers translating it after the fact. It also meant the 4 days generated a body of local production and rapporteur capacity that remains in South Sudan, which matters directly to the case, set out later in this report, for a **continued and expanding partnership**.



Esther Nyambura - Project Manager

Managed the project end to end, coordinating logistics, scheduling, and the moving parts across all four days and two venues, including running the daily Slido feedback exercises that generated the engagement data referenced throughout this report.



Acuil Biong Deng - Rapporteur

Produced the detailed daily records of proceedings, discussion themes, and participant questions, including the day-by-day summaries and recommendations captured across the four sessions.



Aguer Lino Dhieu - Content Production Lead

Led content production for the programme, overseeing the visual and material output of the training as it happened, ensuring the four days were properly captured and produced to a standard befitting such a program.



Kedinda James Peter Machar - Content Production Assistant

Supported content production across the four days, assisting in capturing and producing photos and videos from the sessions as they unfolded.



Gop Makoi Bol Kodi - Content Production Assistant

Supported content production across the four days, assisting in capturing and producing photos and videos from the sessions as they unfolded.

Presidential Press Unit, Republic of South Sudan

The programme's delivery was also anchored on the ground by members of the Presidential Press Unit, whose direct involvement ensured the training ran with the coordination, materials, and institutional access that only an office embedded in the Presidency itself could provide.



Jok Marial Mading - Deputy Director of Press

Jok managed the programme from the Government's side, providing the coordination between FELT Africa and the Office of the President that kept all four days aligned with the Presidency's own protocol and priorities.



Anyuon Amos Dhieu - Senior Photographer

Managed the event's branding and training materials, ensuring every session carried the visual consistency befitting a programme convened by the Government.

South Sudan Broadcasting Corporation



Mathiang Joseph Dhal - Senior News Anchor

Mathiang served as MC throughout the four days, bringing a broadcaster's polish and command of the room to guiding participants and dignitaries through a programme of this standing.

PROGRAMME PROCEEDINGS

DAY 1 – 23 JULY 2026

Day 1 convened SPLM party press units and political messaging teams, opening with remarks from Cde. Hon. David Yau Yau and Cde. Dr. Akol Paul Koordit, a tribute to President Salva Kiir Mayardit, and an opening keynote from Dennis Onsarigo, before turning to Diana Ngao's session on strategic messaging, setting the agenda and holding a disciplined message ahead of the December 2026 vote.

OPENING REMARKS

Cde. Hon. Gen. David Yau Yau

Deputy Minister of Information, Communication Technology and Postal Services



Representing Minister Hon. Ateny Wek Ateny, the Deputy Minister opened with the news that had defined the previous day: Comrade Chairman had signed the constitutional amendment into law, clearing the road to 22 December in law after 14 years of carrying that promise. He told participants plainly that the law had now caught up with the promise, and that from that morning, the work of delivering it belonged to the room in front of him.

He framed the stakes of the training in a single test: a nation is judged not only by how it votes, but by how it speaks to itself before it votes. Where information is clear, he said, panic recedes; where information is trusted, confidence grows, and that is the reason the room had been convened.

He then placed the elections within the arc of South Sudan's liberation struggle itself, reminding participants that theirs had been a liberation movement that carried its case by arms because no other road was open to it, and that many who walked that road did not live to see the flag raised. December, he said, is the completion of that struggle, a movement that fought for the people's right to decide now submitting itself to their decision.

Turning to the legal and institutional guardrails around the campaign, he stated that South Sudan's laws protect communicators' voice while forbidding what destroys peace, citing the Media Authority's mandate to combat hate speech and incitement, and the Political Parties Council's binding code on peaceful campaigning, media conduct, and the use of state resources. He stressed that these rules were written by South Sudanese, out of what South Sudanese have suffered, not imposed from outside.

Speaking to the country's linguistic diversity, he offered participants a working discipline for their messaging, using the Nile itself as the image: it is not one stream, but many streams that agreed to become one river. His test for every communicator in the room was this: a word that could not be said in Juba Arabic, before everyone present together, does not belong in the campaign at all. If it cannot be heard by every South Sudanese, it should not be said to any South Sudanese.

He acknowledged the reality of the information environment they would be operating in, noting that today an election is contested in the air as much as in the field, and that rumour moves fast and does not wait for the morning paper.

His answer to a bad word, he said, is not silence but a better word, said sooner, by a person willing to put their name to it. On that basis, he committed his Ministry to widening connectivity, strengthening protection against cyber attacks, and bringing the Media Authority's public information online so that citizens could reach the truth directly.

He closed with a charge that doubled as a working motto for the 4 days ahead: to be fast, but factual; confident, but careful; patriotic, but professional, and to produce communicators who inform without inflaming, and persuade without provoking, so that the Republic leaves this election more united than it was found.

“*Let us be fast, but factual. Confident, but careful. Patriotic, but professional.*

- HON. DAVID YAU YAU

Cde. Dr. Akol Paul Koordit, Secretary General, SPLM

Dr. Koordit opened by situating the training against a very immediate development: President Kiir's recent signing of the legal amendments paving the way for the December polls.

He framed this moment as one in which communication will play a pivotal role in safeguarding national stability, and described the responsibility now resting on media practitioners, journalists, government communicators and public communicators as immense. He reminded participants that they are co-founders of the Republic, and that they carry a further responsibility as role models for the younger generation.



He spoke directly to the dual power of the media, stating plainly that it has the power to build a society, and equally the power to tear one down, and pointed to lessons from within South Sudan and internationally that demonstrate the consequences of how that power is exercised.

On that basis, he called on participants to be deliberate in the perspectives and narratives they create, insisting that their communication must contribute toward peace, inspire hope, and promote reconciliation. He grounded this in strict professional ethics, stressing that information must be properly collected, verified, fact-checked and analysed before it reaches the public, and that the public interest must come first at all times.

He also flagged the responsible and professional use of modern digital platforms as essential to strengthening the national press going forward.

He closed by crediting the FELT Africa training as vital in equipping SPLM cadres, government communicators and journalists with the technical skills required for coverage before, during and after the elections, and urged South Sudan's media landscape to remain professional, transparent, and dedicated to national unity as the country moves forward.

“Let us be pillars of truth. Let us communicate responsibly. Let us uphold professional ethics. And let us use the power of communication to promote peace, hope, reconciliation and national unity.”

- CDE. DR. AKOL PAUL KOORDIT

Tribute to President Salva Kiir Mayardit

Jok Marial Mading | Deputy Director of Press at the Office of the President



Following the opening remarks, Jok read a tribute prepared on behalf of Hon. Arek Deng, titled "A Life Given to South Sudan."

The tribute traced President Kiir's life as a story inseparable from the life of the nation itself, opening with his early years in Akon, Gogrial County, where, long before the world knew his name, he had already chosen the harder path of discipline and sacrifice over an easier one.

It moved through more than two decades in the bush with the SPLM/A from 1983, years the tribute described as marked by hunger, loss, and comrades buried in the soil they were fighting to free, and to the moment in 2005 when, following the death of Dr. John Garang de Mabior barely three weeks after the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed, it was President Kiir who steadied a grieving movement and a fragile peace rather than allowing the dream to die with the dreamer.

It recounted his stewardship of the delicate six-year interim period as First Vice President of Sudan and President of the Government of Southern Sudan, culminating in the 9 January 2011 referendum in which 98.83% of South Sudanese voted for freedom, and the raising of the Republic's flag on 9 July 2011.

The tribute then turned to the harder work that followed independence: building a state's first institutions, a constitution, a currency, a civil service, an army answerable to a republic, embassies, and a seat at the African Union and the United Nations, largely from nothing. It did not pass over the conflict that began in December 2013, describing it instead as the chapter in which the President's character was most tested, and his repeated return to the negotiating table, through the 2015 Agreement and the 2018 Revitalised Agreement, and his welcome of his own former deputy back into government in 2020, as evidence of a leader who chose reconciliation over revenge, again and again, by deliberate discipline rather than convenience.

The tribute placed particular weight on two themes: a leader who has consistently taken personal responsibility for his government's shortcomings rather than deflecting blame onto ministers or generals, and a peacemaker who has told his own people, plainly, that the cycle of revenge must end with this generation so that their grandchildren do not inherit the same grief.

It closed by anchoring the moment of the training itself within this longer arc, President Kiir's insistence, before ambassadors, regional bodies and his own people, that South Sudan's sovereignty will be expressed through the ballot and not the bullet, and that the transition to the December 2026 election must be one the country's children can be proud of.

For more than four decades, one has walked inside the other. This is the story of President Salva Kiir Mayardit, and it is, in its truest sense, the story of South Sudan itself.

- JOK MARIAL MADING

OPENING KEYNOTE

The Golden Opportunity to Shape South Sudan's Narrative

Facilitator: **Dennis Onsarigo**

Following the lunch break, Mr. Onsarigo expressed his appreciation for returning to South Sudan, recalling his first visit to the country as a journalist covering Kenya's former President Daniel Moi in his role as Special Envoy to the peace process.

He explained that the training was intended to strengthen election preparedness through effective communication and strategic messaging, to support participants in promoting credible information and strengthening public confidence, and to allow South Sudanese communicators to shape their country's image beyond commonly reported narratives.



Mr. Onsarigo then facilitated a round of introductions in which participants introduced themselves to one another. Many were meeting colleagues from other institutions for the first time. The exercise put the room at ease early, broke down the natural distance between officials from different offices and levels of government, and gave the training its first practical demonstration of the unity it was designed to build: before any session on messaging or law had begun, participants were already relating to one another as a single room of South Sudanese with a shared stake in the country's story.

That spirit of common purpose carried throughout as the working tone of the programme.

SESSION 1

Strategic Messaging - Setting the Agenda and Holding the Message Before Elections

Facilitator: **Diana Ngao**

Ms. Ngao opened with an icebreaker built around alertness, participants standing in a circle, each catching a neighbour's finger from one palm while pulling their own free from the other on the count of 3. The game that rewards divided attention set the tone for the rest of the session.

She started her powerful presentation by reminding participants that communication is a two-way street, requiring both listening and engagement, before outlining FELT Africa's history and the objectives of the training. Following an icebreaker, participants agreed on ground rules of open participation, mutual respect, and time discipline.



The facilitator stressed that whoever sets the agenda first tends to own the story, and that silence is not neutral: it is a vacuum someone else will fill. Building on this, participants were encouraged to acknowledge historical challenges rather than ignore them, to present factual and evidence-based information, and to promote balanced stories that place national achievement alongside existing difficulty.

Ms. Diana also stressed that only messages supported by credible evidence gain public trust and are widely shared.

The session closed with a call to action for participants to communicate credible information supporting public confidence in the electoral process.



The session closed with a call to action for participants to communicate credible information supporting public confidence in the electoral process, followed by an Arabic translation of the day's proceedings delivered by Marco Deng.

International Benchmark

The Message House framework and the "stay on message, in volume, over time" discipline are standard practice in international political and government communications, the same architecture used by bodies like the UK Government Communication Service's OASIS model and by NDI and International IDEA in their own party-communications capacity building globally.

This is the internationally recognized way serious campaigns and governments structure message discipline.



DAY 2 – 24 JULY 2026

Day 2 covered more ground than its 2 named sessions imply. Chaka Sichangi's session ran in 2 distinct parts, first establishing the legal and civic architecture of the election itself, the law, the media, and the nation, before turning to the technical relationship between census data, constituency boundaries, and parliamentary representation, a second body of material in its own right. James Njoroge's session on social media strategy and digital campaign communications followed with equal depth. The day closed with a facilitator Q&A session drawing on all of it.

SESSION 2

The Elections, the Law, and the Nation - The Media as Midwife of the New Dawn

Facilitator: **Chaka Sichangi**

Mr. Sichangi framed the December 2026 election not as an isolated event but as one clause in a longer constitutional covenant running from the 2011 referendum through this vote to the census and permanent constitution beyond, and argued that the media is not an observer of that covenant but the room in which it is negotiated.

This gave rise to the session's central image: the media as midwife rather than mirror, a role that does not create the nation but safeguards a delivery that already belongs to its people.



He distinguished the three national askings participants would face directly this year, a referendum asking a single yes or no of everyone at once, an election lending power to a steward rather than surrendering it, and a census counting the family before the house is built, tying this to a live practical fact: because no fresh census exists, South Sudan's 2026 constituency map reverts to the 102 constituencies drawn from the 2010 count.

He then walked participants through the legal line separating protected speech from incitement, tracing it from the 1946 Nuremberg trials, where Julius Streicher was convicted for publishing calls for extermination while knowing the killings were under way, while Hans Fritzsche was acquitted for partisan but non-incitement broadcasting, to the 2003 Arusha tribunal's application of that same doctrine to Rwanda's RTLM.

The test he left participants with was precise: the law has never punished bias or loyalty, only the arming of audiences, and the question before airing anything is whether it makes violence against identifiable people more thinkable.

He closed by grounding the session in South Sudan's own precedent and an African rather than borrowed intellectual tradition, comparing the ballot to the baraza, the council beneath the tree, scaled to a nation of millions, and cautioning that the near-unanimous information culture of 2011 must now give way to a different discipline: making a divided result feel legitimate, rather than making defeat feel like the loss of one's country.

International Benchmark

The session's core distinction between protected political speech and incitement reflects the boundary set by Article 19 and Article 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and specifically the UN's Rabat Plan of Action (2012), the global reference document on where that line sits.

SESSION 3

Social Media Strategy and Digital Campaign Communications

Facilitator: **James Njoroge**



Mr. Njoroge opened by framing the 2026 election as a contest that will be won or lost on phones and feeds as much as on rally stages, grounding the session in South Sudan's actual digital landscape: a population of roughly 12.2 million, active social media users numbering close to 997,000, just 14.2% of the adult voting population, concentrated overwhelmingly on Facebook and skewed toward a younger, predominantly male audience.

Small as that digital population is, he argued, it carries disproportionate political influence, and whoever commands it commands the framing everyone else reacts to.

He then walked participants through platform-specific strategy: Facebook as the public arena for political debate and official announcements, WhatsApp as the private front line for community-level persuasion and direct voter contact, X as the arena where journalists and diplomats set international framing, and TikTok and Instagram as the youth and aspirational arenas respectively, each requiring its own content logic rather than a copy-pasted message.

Every post, he stressed, had to serve one of four content pillars, the President's record, the peace he holds, the development he delivers, or the future he is building, with nothing published on any platform without central clearance.

On the responsible use of artificial intelligence in campaign content, he set firm non-negotiables: every AI-assisted fact, date, and quote independently verified before publication, human translation only for South Sudan's local languages, and an absolute prohibition on generating synthetic images or voices of any real person, including the President, given the reputational risk deepfakes pose to the campaign narrative.

The session closed with a live drill: participants were given a single approved presidential message and twenty minutes to turn it into a full five-platform content package, a video script, a Facebook post, a WhatsApp broadcast, an X thread, and a quote card brief. The exercise gave participants hands-on practice at the exact cross-platform discipline the session had just taught, translating one cleared message into five formats without losing the line.

International Benchmark

Social Media Strategy and Digital Campaign Communications (Njoroge). The session's AI-use guardrails (independent verification, prohibition on synthetic depictions of real people) track directly with UNESCO's 2021 Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence and its subsequent guidance on generative AI and elections, the leading global framework governments are now citing on this exact issue.



DAY 3 – 25 JULY 2026

Day 3 shifted to the State Government cohort, opening with Hon. Ajou Luol Akuei's briefing on media regulation before Hon. Arek Deng's session commanding the President's record and Mbugua Ng'ang'a's session on election-day communication and reporting.

SESSION 4

Commanding the Narrative - Understanding and Communicating H.E. the President's Record

Facilitator: **Hon. Arek Ajou Aldo Deng**



Hon. Amb. Arek Deng delivered what she described as the authoritative brief as the standard every communicator in the room was expected to carry from that point forward.

She organised the record into 4 approved frames, the Founding Father, the Peacemaker, the Nation Builder, and the Statesman, and walked participants through the record each frame draws on: the founding of the SPLM/A in 1983, President Kiir's steadying of the movement after Dr. John Garang died in 2005, the raising of the flag at independence in 2011, the building of the Republic's institutions from nothing, and his repeated return to the negotiating table through the 2013 to 2018 conflict, culminating in the Revitalised Agreement and his welcome of his former deputy back into government in 2020.

She then set the language discipline participants were to carry forward: acknowledging hardship honestly rather than denying it, framing every difficulty as a chapter in the President's record rather than its destination, and a firm list of what is never said: no personal attacks on the opposition, no speculation, no commentary on matters belonging to the Presidency alone.

"Misinformation travels faster than correction," she told the room, which was precisely why the standing orders she left them with were so exacting: study the record until it can be delivered from memory, never improvise around the President's legacy, and refer any doubt up the chain rather than guess.

An extensive question-and-answer session followed, with participants pressing on practical concerns, how journalists outside Juba could access timely information from the Presidency, the mechanics of media accreditation, and how communicators should hold the line between protecting free expression and curbing hate speech during a contested campaign.

Hon. Arek Deng closed the session on the note she had opened it with: "We are the custodians of our story. Our story is a story of choosing the ballot and not the bullet." One President, one record, one narrative, and one voice, she told participants, theirs.

International Benchmark

The "one voice, one record" doctrine for government spokespeople is standard international government communications practice, structurally similar to the approach used by the UK Government Communication Service and the EU Spokesperson's Service: a single authoritative brief that all subordinate communicators are trained to use before facing the public.

SESSION 5

Strategic Messaging - Setting the Agenda and Holding the Message Before Elections (Part 2)

Facilitator: **Diana Ngao**

Ms. Ngao returned for part 2 of her Day 1 session - taking participants through the practical construction of a message house, the same framework introduced conceptually on Day One now built by hand.

The structure she gave participants to work from was deliberately architectural: a roof, the single core message the entire structure exists to hold up; pillars beneath it, each a supporting message backed by its own piece of evidence; and a foundation underneath the whole house, an honest answer to the hardest, most sceptical version of the question a sceptical citizen or journalist might ask.

Working from a single given core message, "Elections will and must happen in December," participants were divided into 8 groups and given 15 minutes to build 3 supporting pillars establishing what makes the December date credible and achievable, one proof point per pillar, and a foundation answering that hardest question honestly rather than defensively, before 7 minutes to present their house to the room.

Groups closed each presentation with a concrete call to action for their own press units to carry forward.

Where Day 1 had asked participants to understand why a message needs to be built this way, Day 3 asked them to actually build one under time pressure and defend it in front of their peers, giving the theory a real test.



The exercise closed with a short discussion in which several participants observed that the discipline of building a foundation, answering the hardest question honestly rather than defensively, was the part of the exercise they had found most difficult and most valuable, a fitting echo of the training's own insistence that credibility is built on acknowledged difficulty, not its absence.



SESSION 6

Election Day Communication and Reporting

Facilitator: **Mbugua Ng'ang'a**

Drawing on Kenya's own electoral history, the transitions of 2002 and 2013, the crisis of 2007, and the elections of 2010, 2017, and 2022, Mr. Ng'ang'a grounded the session in the principle of beginning with the end in mind: a clear reporting plan, assigned responsibilities, and preparation completed before polls open, down to practical detail like voting before coverage begins.

He framed a journalist's task on election day around 3 questions any reporter should answer for their audience: what is happening and why it matters, how the country arrived here, and what the future holds.

He stressed that communicating the public mood, whether citizens feel optimistic or anxious, matters as much as reporting the count itself.

He reminded participants that an election is, at bottom, a contest between politicians, parties, and ideas, and that this can raise political temperature quickly. The media's role on election day, as such, is not to referee that contest but to actively cool it, helping citizens see voting itself as the day's real story: their voice being heard, their vote counting, and their future being shaped, rather than treating the contest between candidates as the only thing worth covering.

On results specifically, he set a discipline participants could apply directly: it is better to be late than to be wrong, and confidence in an outcome should never outrun verification.

He gave participants a practical filter for avoiding personal bias while on air, distinguishing clearly between what a journalist knows, what they have merely heard, what they believe, and what has actually been confirmed.

He closed by tying election-day reporting to the country's longer accountability, arguing that journalists carry a responsibility to help audiences demand accountability from whoever the vote elects, not only to report who won.



International Benchmark

Election Day Communication (Mbugua Ng'ang'a). Outcome-first newsroom deployment planning mirrors the election-day media protocols developed by International IDEA and the ACE Electoral Knowledge Network, the two most widely used international reference bodies for election administration and media coverage.



DAY 4 – 26 JULY 2026

Day 4 closed out the State Government cohort's programme, moving through Mbugua Ng'ang'a's session on managing disinformation, Chaka Sichangi's session on country framing and the good name of South Sudan, and Dennis Onsarigo's session on statecraft, narrative control, and crisis management, before the closing ceremony and certificate awarding.

SESSION 7

Managing Disinformation and Hostile Media Coverage

Facilitator: **Mbugua Ng'ang'a**



Mr. Ng'ang'a drew a sharp line between disinformation, deliberately fabricated content spread with intent to mislead, and misinformation, false content shared without that intent, and set out the four forms disinformation typically takes: manipulated content, imposter content impersonating trusted brands, fabricated content designed to provoke emotion, and true content paired with false context.

He named political competition, digitalisation, and concentrated media ownership as the conditions that let disinformation spread fastest, particularly during a campaign period. "Facts remain the cornerstone of journalism," he told participants, a line that anchored the rest of the session.

He then gave participants a practical verification checklist: confirm the credibility of the source, examine images closely for signs of manipulation, and check whether other credible outlets have published the same claim before trusting it.

On countering hostile coverage specifically, he was clear that the correct response is verified fact, not silence and not amplification, since repeating a false claim in order to rebut it can spread it further than leaving it unanswered.

And pressing participants to interrogate their own motives as much as their sources, he asked the room directly: "What is the purpose of chasing the stories you are chasing?"

He closed by placing this discipline inside a larger purpose, arguing that responsible journalism during an election is itself an act of nation-building, alongside civic education and institutional partnership, not a defensive posture against bad actors.

The subsequent Slido assessment of this session, detailed under Training Impact below, indicates that while the underlying concept was clearly understood in participants' own words elsewhere in the feedback, the precise scenario-based application of the misinformation and disinformation distinction is an area where a follow-on session would meaningfully strengthen retention.

International Benchmark

The misinformation/disinformation distinction taught in this session is the typology established by Claire Wardle and Hossein Derakhshan in "Information Disorder: Toward an Interdisciplinary Framework for Research and Policy Making," published by the Council of Europe in 2017. It is the single most cited and most globally adopted framework in this field, used by UNESCO, First Draft, and virtually every national disinformation-response programme worldwide.

SESSION 8

Country Framing - Ceeng, Dheng, and the Good Name of South Sudan

Facilitator: **Chaka Sichangi**



Drawing on Dr. Francis Mading Deng's scholarship on the Dinka concepts of Ceeng, right conduct within a community, and Dheng, dignity and nobility of bearing, Mr. Sichangi established a nation's reputation as collective wealth rather than a matter for any one individual or institution to defend alone, describing South Sudan itself as, in effect, the largest corporate person there is, one whose name is being weighed daily in capitals the room will never sit in.

He walked participants through South Sudan's defamation law, the Penal Code's retained criminal provisions, the newly signed Cybercrimes and Computer Misuse Act, and the African Court's ruling in *Konaté v Burkina Faso*, which held that custodial sentences for defamation violate the African Charter, tracing a clear regional and global direction of travel away from criminal punishment and toward civil remedy for reputational harm.

He then showed participants that a damaged national reputation is not permanent, citing Germany's transformation of "Made in Germany" from a mark of shame into the most trusted label in world commerce, Rwanda's deliberate rebuilding of its global image within a generation, and Ghana's Year of Return converting a painful history into renewed international investment.

Drawing on agenda-setting theory, he reminded participants that the press does not only tell people what to think, it tells them what to think about, and that the frame chosen for a story decides what the public understands the problem, the cause, and the remedy to be.

He concluded by offering participants an editorial framework drawn from scripture, verification, framing, ethics, and deliberate selection of what deserves the nation's attention at all, arguing that what a nation chooses to think about is, in the end, what it becomes.

International Benchmark

The session's central legal argument, that defamation should move from criminal penalty toward civil remedy is the explicit standard set by Principle 22 of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights' Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information in Africa (2019), which calls on African states to amend criminal defamation and libel laws in favour of civil sanctions and states that custodial sentences for defamation violate the right to freedom of expression. The Konaté v Burkina Faso ruling already cited in the session materials is the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights judgment that established this principle in binding regional jurisprudence. As such, this session trained South Sudanese communicators directly against the continent's own highest human rights standard on the subject.

SESSION 9

Statecraft, Narrative Control, Crisis Management and Election Communications

Facilitator: **Dennis Onsarigo**



Mr. Onsarigo opened by framing 22 December 2026 as a contest between two competing narratives of South Sudan: a nation completing its journey to permanent government or a state still struggling through fragile transition, arguing that regional partners and international media are already choosing which story to tell.

He set out the four pillars of the 2026 election communications strategy and the clean institutional handoff participants were required to respect: government communicators speak on governance, while the National Election Commission and Political Parties Council alone own electoral administration and party conduct, with any process question referred to whichever institution owns it.

On crisis management, he introduced the golden rule of speed with accuracy, arguing that a verified holding line issued in 30 minutes beats a speculative statement issued in 5, and set a 60-minute target for a cleared response following any incident, delivered through a three-step command chain running from monitor to risk-assessment team to spokesperson.

He stressed that 3 assets need to exist before a crisis arrives, not during one: a pre-approved holding statement template, a live coordination link with security sector communicators, and a single, unified spokesperson voice, warning that a team without these built in advance ends up building them under fire.

Participants practised the Fact Sandwich for countering falsehoods, leading with the truth, naming the falsehood once without repeating its wording, and closing with the truth restated and evidenced, working through live simulation scenarios modelled on plausible election-period crises, including a viral deepfake audio clip falsely attributed to a senior party figure.

The session closed with the protocols governing daily international press briefings and a clear rule for hostile questioning: never say "no comment," since to any watching audience, it reads as guilt.

International Benchmark

The Fact Sandwich correction technique (truth, name the falsehood once, truth again) is the same structure promoted internationally by fact-checking and correction methodology bodies including Full Fact and First Draft, and closely related to the "truth sandwich" approach now standard at outlets like the BBC's Reality Check. The crisis command chain (monitor, risk-assessment team, spokesperson) mirrors the internationally standard incident command structure used in crisis and emergency communications globally.

CLOSING REMARKS 1

Registration, Standards, and Safety: The Media Authority's Mandate

Facilitator: **Hon. Ajou Luol Akuei, Managing Director, South Sudan Media Authority**

Hon. Ajou Luol Akuei opened by thanking H.E. the President for the opportunity to serve, before setting out the Media Authority's mandate to regulate the media sector, safeguard professional standards, and promote responsible journalism.

He explained that the Media Authority Act, which came into force in 2014, was established to address longstanding challenges including harassment of practitioners and the absence of a clear distinction between professional journalists and non-journalists.

He presented the Election Media Coverage Guidelines as the governing framework for responsible election reporting and urged all practitioners to ensure their coverage is lawful, balanced, ethical and compliant.



Journalist safety was raised as a priority, with registration, including of freelance practitioners, identified as an important mechanism for protection and professional recognition ahead of the elections.

He also acknowledged that content moderation of social media remains constrained by limited financial resources but stressed that this must not prevent consistent enforcement of media law during the electoral period, and urged all media houses and social media platforms operating in South Sudan to obtain the necessary legal documentation and register accordingly.

“*We need to ensure everything is done according to the law.*”

- HON. AJOU LUOL AKUEI

CLOSING REMARKS 2

Go Ye Therefore

Facilitator: **Hon. Arek Ajou Aldo Deng**

Hon. Arek closed the training by marking the transformation the 4 days had produced: participants had walked into the room as spokespersons, communicators, editors and press officers drawn from different departments, states and branches of government and party, and were walking out, she told them, as a cadre, a single disciplined voice ready to command the Republic's narrative ahead of one of the most consequential moment in its history.

She reminded the room that they were no longer working alone, that the colleagues seated beside them were now the same voices who would stand with them on future podiums and in future interviews.

She spoke directly to the change she had witnessed over training: some had arrived uncertain and were leaving certain, some had arrived cautious and were leaving confident, some had arrived as capable communicators and were leaving, she said, as commanders of the narrative.



She was careful to frame the certificates participants had earned not as an ending but as a beginning: "This training is not the destination. This training is the departure point. The work begins now."

She charged participants to hold President Kiir's record with pride and evidence, to carry his and the nation's dignity into every future conversation, and to trust, under pressure, the discipline the training had built into them.

She closed by naming the story she was sending participants out to tell, of a nation that walked through decades of war and still chose to build rather than burn, led by a President who has given more than 60 years of quiet service and chose reconciliation over permanent enmity. She charged the room to carry that account to Juba and every town in South Sudan, to Nairobi, Addis Ababa and Kampala, to Washington, Brussels and Beijing, to newsrooms, airwaves and group chats alike, closing with a final charge: "Go and command the narrative. Go and tell the beautiful story of South Sudan."

She closed by thanking the participants, the Presidential Press Unit, the Ministry of Presidential Affairs, and the FELT Africa Group team for delivering the programme.

“We walk out as a cadre. A single, disciplined, unified voice, ready to command the narrative of our Republic ahead of the most consequential moment in our nation's history.”

- HON. AMB. AREK AJOU DENG

CERTIFICATE AWARDING CEREMONY

Hon. Amb. Arek Ajou Deng, Hon. Ajou Luol Akuei & Dennis Onsarigo

The programme closed with Hon. Amb Arek, Hon. Akuei and Mr. Onsarigo jointly presiding over the certificate awarding ceremony, presenting each participant with a certificate of completion recognising the 4 days of training.

The mood in the room shifted visibly as certificates were called out and handed over; participants who had spent four days challenging themselves through drills, simulations, and difficult questions were now visibly proud of tangible recognition for that work, applauding one another as colleagues came forward to receive theirs.

Beyond the moment itself, the certificate carries lasting value for every participant who earned it. Issued jointly by FELT Africa and the Office of the President, it stands as documented, verifiable evidence of specialised training in strategic messaging, crisis communication, digital campaign management, and election-specific protocols - credentials that can be attached directly to a participant's CV and cited in future professional opportunities, whether within government, in journalism, or beyond.



GIFT PRESENTATION TO THE FELT AFRICA TEAM

Hon. Amb. Arek Ajou Deng

Before the certificates were awarded, Hon. Arek presented the FELT Africa team with a set of South Sudanese jewellery and locally made products to carry back to Nairobi.

It was a small moment in the arc of 4 days, but not an incidental one. Where certificates recognised the training delivered, the gifts recognised the people who delivered it, and the distinction mattered: it marked the relationship between FELT Africa and the Office of the President as a friendship built over shared work rather than a transaction that ends after the engagement.

That the gesture came wrapped in South Sudan's own craftsmanship made it more meaningful still. Each piece the team carried home was a tangible piece of the country whose story they had spent multiple days helping its communicators learn to tell. As such, it was a fitting way to close a programme built entirely on the conviction that South Sudan's story belongs to South Sudanese hands to make and to give.

FELT Africa received the gesture with eternal gratitude.





TRAINING IMPACT

Participant understanding and reception of the programme was measured throughout the four days using the Slido platform, combining rating polls, quiz questions with correct-answer scoring, and open-text reflection prompts. The results below are drawn directly from that dataset.

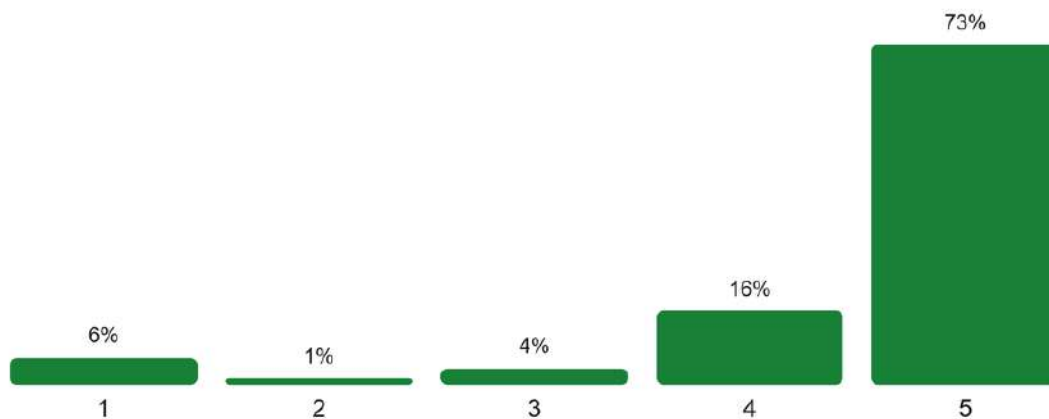
Overall Programme Rating



What is your overall rating of the FELT Africa Election Readiness Training Program? Were your expectations met?

Rating Poll 70 votes 70 participants

Score: **4.5**



slido

Slido rating poll: "What is your overall rating of the FELT Africa Election Readiness Training Program? Were your expectations met?"

Across 70 respondents, the programme scored an average of 4.5 out of 5. Seventy-three% of participants gave the top rating of 5, and a further 16% rated the programme 4, meaning 89% of all respondents rated their experience a 4 or 5. Only 7% rated the programme 1 or 2.

RETENTION OF CORE FRAMEWORKS

Quiz questions administered during and after individual sessions tested whether participants had retained the specific frameworks taught, rather than only their general impressions. Results were strong across most sessions, with one clear exception.

Day 1 - Strategic Messaging

Asked how South Sudan's story should be told to the world, 88% of 41 respondents correctly selected the framing of a nation completing its journey to permanent, democratic government, and 41% also correctly identified honesty about what remains undone alongside what has been achieved as a component of that framing.

Day 2 - Social Media Strategy



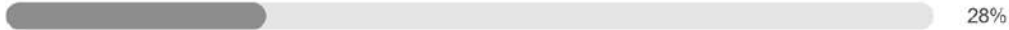
The campaign has approved one message about H.E. President Salva Kiir Mayardit's nation-building record. How should the digital team distribute it across five platforms?

Quiz question

✓ 40 answers

👤 40 participants

Publish one identical asset everywhere to preserve consistency - 11 answers



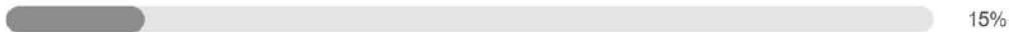
28%

Keep the central message fixed while adapting format, tone, cadence and presentation to each platform's audience - 18 answers



45%

Develop a separate political narrative for every platform - 6 answers



15%

Prioritise Facebook and use the other platforms only to redirect audiences there - 5 answers



13%

slido

Slido quiz: Platform distribution of a single approved message

Presented with the scenario of a single approved message about the President's nation-building record, 45% of 40 respondents correctly identified that the central message should stay fixed while format, tone, cadence and presentation adapt to each platform's audience, the precise cross-platform discipline taught in the session.

The remaining responses split across simpler but less complete strategies, publishing one identical asset everywhere, developing separate narratives per platform, or prioritising Facebook alone, indicating an opportunity to reinforce this specific nuance in any follow-on digital training.

Day 3 - Election Day Communication



A newsroom is preparing its election-day deployment plan. Which approach best reflects the principle of beginning with the end in mind?

Quiz question ✓ 46 answers 👤 46 participants

Assign reporters according to whichever polling stations attract the greatest crowds - 2 answers

4%

Define the desired journalistic, organisational and national outcomes, then map locations, reporting lines, equipment and responsibilities - 32 answers



70%

Allow individual reporters to determine their schedules after voting begins - 5 answers

11%

Focus the plan on the opening of polls because the closing time remains uncertain - 7 answers

15%

slido

Slido quiz: Newsroom election-day deployment planning

70% of 46 respondents correctly identified that a newsroom's election-day deployment plan should begin by defining the desired journalistic, organisational and national outcomes before mapping locations, reporting lines, equipment and responsibilities, directly reflecting the "begin with the end in mind" principle taught in the session.

A companion wordcloud exercise on holding the narrative under pressure, drawing 70 responses from 54 participants, returned Truth, Integrity, Honesty, Accountability and Consistency as the dominant terms participants associated with earning audience trust, a strong qualitative echo of the session's central teaching.

Day 4 - Country Framing

An open reflection asking participants whether they had ever passed on or let die an unconfirmed rumour about someone's name drew 79 responses from 61 participants, the large majority describing a deliberate choice to verify before repeating, several explicitly connecting that discipline to their responsibility as journalists to protect both individual dignity and the good name of South Sudan.

A related quiz asked whether reputation affects a country's ability to trade internationally and attract investment: 93% of 60 respondents said yes.

A further open prompt on the 3 things participants would remember about the good name of South Sudan drew 86 responses from 55 participants, with recurring themes of peaceful coexistence, the price paid in blood for the country's name, and the responsibility of every citizen as an ambassador of the nation.

Day 4 - Managing Disinformation



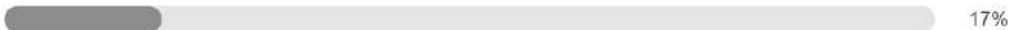
A citizen shares an inaccurate election notice believing it to be genuine, while the original creator knowingly fabricated it to mislead voters. How should the two actions be classified?

Quiz question

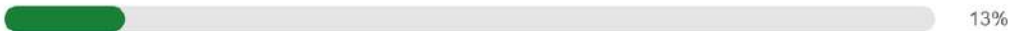
✓ 53 answers

👤 53 participants

Both actions are disinformation because the information is false - 9 answers



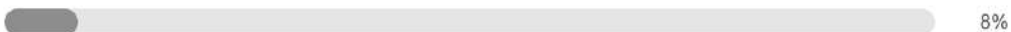
The creator produced disinformation, while the citizen spread misinformation - 7 answers



The creator produced misinformation, while the citizen spread disinformation - 33 answers



Both actions are misinformation because social media enabled their distribution - 4 answers



slido

Slido quiz: classifying a citizen who unknowingly shares a fabricated election notice against its knowing creator

This is the one area where the assessment data shows a genuine retention gap.

Presented with a scenario distinguishing a citizen who unknowingly shared a fabricated election notice from the person who knowingly created it, only 13% of 53 respondents correctly classified the creator's action as disinformation and the citizen's as misinformation. 62% selected the reversed pairing.

The underlying distinction, that intent to deceive is what separates the 2 terms, was taught clearly in the session and is well understood in the open-text responses elsewhere in the dataset; the difficulty here appears specific to applying the definitions correctly under a scenario-based question. This is addressed directly under Recommendations below.

OVERALL TRAINING TAKEAWAYS

A closing open-text prompt asking participants what one thing they wanted to walk away with drew 59 responses from 47 participants.

Recurring themes included practical skills for ethical and accurate election reporting, a desire to shift South Sudan's international narrative through consistent, evidence-based communication, and an appreciation for the media's role as what one participant, echoing Chaka Sichangi's session, called "the midwife of the new dawn."

One respondent submitted their reflection in Arabic, underscoring the cross-lingual reach of the programme's core themes.

“Journalists are the gatekeepers of public trust. In elections, that gate must be made of ethics, not ego. Democracy does not die in the dark. Democracy dies in the lie. Ethical journalism keeps the lights on.

- PARTICIPANT

KEY OUTCOMES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The four days produced results that can be measured against 3 separate benchmarks: what participants themselves reported, what the assessment data verified, and how closely the curriculum's own design tracked the international standards and the FELT Africa Philosophy on National Agency and Nation-Building set out earlier in this report.

Taken together, the following outcomes describe not only what was delivered, but why it holds up.

- SPLM party press units, political messaging teams, and state communications personnel from the Presidency, ministerial offices, governors' offices, and advisors' teams across all ten states and three administrative areas were trained under a single, unified curriculum, itself consistent with the international best practice, recommended by UNESCO and International IDEA, of keeping party-affiliated and state communicators in coordinated but distinct tracks during an election period.
- Participants achieved a shared command of President Kiir's record and common frameworks for strategic messaging, spokesperson skills, crisis communication, social media management, and election-specific protocols, evidenced by an average participant satisfaction score of 4.5 out of 5 and strong quiz-verified retention across the majority of core frameworks taught, a direct expression of FELT Africa's Philosophy on National Agency and Nation-Building: participants left holding these frameworks as their own, not as instructions handed down.
- A practical digital campaign framework, covering platform strategy, content pillars, war-room structure, and responsible AI use, was delivered to the political messaging cohort, with its AI-use safeguards grounded in UNESCO's Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence, the leading global reference on responsible AI use in political communication.
- State-level communicators engaged directly with the Media Authority and the Office of the President, strengthening institutional working relationships ahead of the election period and giving practical form to the Philosophy's conviction that a nation's story is authored by many voices working in coordination, not handed down from one.
- Participants gained practical, assessed tools for election-day reporting, crisis communication, and disinformation management directly relevant to the December 2026 general elections, with the disinformation framework taught matching, almost precisely, the misinformation and disinformation typology set out in the Council of Europe's 2017 "Information Disorder" report, the most widely adopted reference framework globally.
- The programme's structure and delivery, validated by direct engagement with the Deputy Minister of Information, the SPLM Secretary General, and the South Sudan Media Authority, has established FELT Africa as a demonstrated, trusted partner for communications capacity-building at the national level, one whose curriculum arrived independently at the same standards the continent's own human rights bodies and the wider international community hold this work to.

CONCLUSION

The FELT Africa Election Readiness Media Training met and, by the evidence of its own assessment data, exceeded its objective of building a unified, skilled, and well-briefed communications capacity across the South Sudanese government and the SPLM ahead of the December 2026 general elections.

More than a hundred participants drawn from the Presidency, ministerial offices, institutions, the SSBC, and SPLM party structures were equipped with the frameworks and content required to project a consistent, credible national narrative through South Sudan's most consequential election period, and reported an average satisfaction score of 4.5 out of 5 in doing so.

The training also did more than train the room in front of it. Direct engagement from the Deputy Minister of Information, the SPLM Secretary General, and the Managing Director of the South Sudan Media Authority surfaced, independently and repeatedly, a wider set of national communications needs that extend beyond this cohort: a broader journalist community awaiting the same discipline, a small elevated cohort who will soon represent South Sudan's voice to the world, and specific, data-verified refinements that would deepen the impact already achieved with this group.







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