

BLACK TIDE

A VIDEO ON “SOUTH SUDAN’S SILENT KILLER”: OIL POLLUTION



**THE VIDEO TO ONE OF
THE WORLD’S MOST
SHOCKING CRIMES
AGAINST HUMANITY
AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

ANATABAN’S “BLACK TIDE”

South Sudanese artists stand up for their rights to clean water and a healthy environment

Trying to foster peace in a country – South Sudan – wracked by one of the world’s bloodiest and destructive wars.

Giving a voice to those most urgently needing to be heard.

And now attempting to roll back the “black tide” of oil pollution sweeping over the country

Since its founding in 2016, Anataban – it means “we are sick and tired” in Arabic - has taken on the biggest problems facing South Sudan, the world’s youngest country – and one of its most troubled ones.

The amazing thing about Anataban. It is not a political party. Nor a group of development workers.

Anataban is, rather, a collective of artists – artists who have given themselves a very big job - to mobilize their fellow South Sudanese to stand up and speak for their rights to peace, prosperity and clean water.

To that end, Anataban stages street theatre; open mic evenings; murals, sculpture and poetry exhibitions and competitions; and makes videos. Such as “Black Tide” - which has just been released.

“Anataban was founded by 20 artists of all description. We got together for a very simple purpose: to get social justice for our people,” explains John Ador Akoy, Anataban’s co-founder and head of theatre.

Going by his artist’s name of “Long John”, John adds: “Along the way, we found another objective: creating ways for our people to express their concerns and their talents – through culture.”

The South Sudanese recently ranked themselves the “unhappiest country in the world”. Understandably so. More than half of this country of 12 million is facing famine.

This famine and the incessant civil wars have joined with a crippling lack of clean water – caused by oil pollution – in forcing well over a third of the South Sudanese to flee for their lives.

In what may sound paradoxical, this country of crisis also has a thriving cultural scene. Many of its artists, poets and theatre people got their starts at the “Hagana” festival. Hagana means “It is ours”, and the festival has become South Sudan’s most important venue for the performing arts.

“Not a paradox at all,” explains Long John. “There have always been a large number of the artistically-gifted in South Sudan. They were crying out to be heard, to be read, to be seen. And now they have a place to do such – at Anataban’s events.”



ARTICLES ON ANATABAN

(selection)

BBC: *Painting for Peace*

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p04ddzht/p04dc9w8>

Die Zeit: *Müde vom Krieg*

<https://www.zeit.de/gesellschaft/2017-07/ana-taban-suedsudan-afrika-fs>

United States Institute for Peace: *An artists’ movement for peace catches fire*

<https://www.usip.org/publications/2018/01/south-sudan-artists-movement-peace-catches-fire>

WATCH THE FULL VIDEO

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZM5Z3xuDeK4>

ANATABAN: FACTS AND FIGURES

Founded in 2016 in Juba, South Sudan by 20 artists.

Campaigns:

Anataban – “We are sick and tired”

Bloodshed Free2017

Malesh – We are sorry

Soutna – Our voice

Social Media:

Facebook: Anataban SouthSudan

Twitter: @AnatabanSS

Linkedin: John Ador Akoy

Coordinator: Manasseh Mathiang

Assistant to the coordinator: John Ador Akoy

Contact via Skype: Longjonn2

BLACK TIDE VIDEO: THE PEOPLE

Video on “South Sudan’s silent killer” - oil pollution

made by **Anataban Artists’ collective**

Coordination: John Ador Akoy

Video producer and director: Director OBEEZY (Obel Charles)

Featured musicians:

Jonny Bee (John Bosco)

YMO (Yousif Mohamed Nur)



Director OBEEZY

is one of South Sudan’s most accomplished young film-makers. Since launching his career in 2010, he has worked for a large number of NGOs and media companies. Director Obeezy (Obel Charles) joined Anataban in 2018. Check out Director OBEEZY on his YouTube channel: Dir. OBEEZY.

YMO

is a South Sudanese R&B singer who launched his career in 2015 with the hit song “Real Nation”. He joined Anataban in 2017 and quickly went on to become one of its lead vocalists.

Jonny Bee

is one of Anataban’s lead musicians.

John Ador Akoy

is a South Sudanese author, actor, human rights defender, human resources manager and youth activist. One of his major activities nowadays is helping coordinate the work of Anataban.

Financial support for “Black Tide” provided by Hoffnungszeichen Sign of Hope.



SOCIAL MEDIA

sharable short video version:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1AUR_dIO3j9m3E5N0vuulhefsCNM1bir3/view?ts=5c94cfde

Facebook: Anataban SouthSudan

Twitter: @AnatabanSS



THE ARTIST AS AN ACTIVIST

Interview with Anataban's John Ador Akoy

John Ador Akoy has come – literally – a long way. His journey to being one of South Sudan's leading activists and artists started in a refugee camp, to which he was brought to keep him safe. John went on to finish secondary school in Uganda and to get a B.A. in Kenya. Along his way, John has been – and still is – an author, actor, human rights defender, human resources manager and youth activist. One of his major activities nowadays is helping coordinate the work of Anataban, South Sudan's collective of artist activists.

John, did your hard times in a refugee camp – being there without your parents – prepare or even predestine you to be an artist or activist?

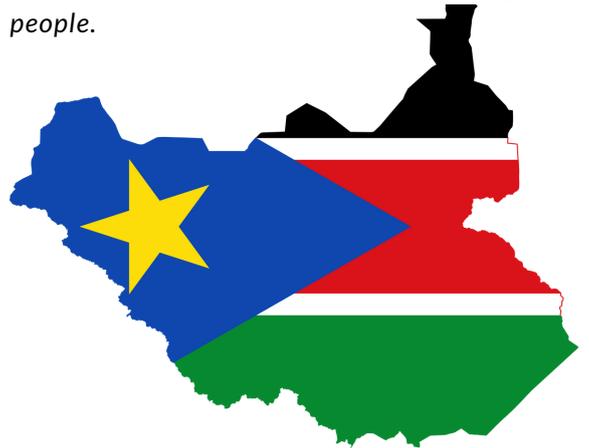
Yes, the hard times I had in the refugee camp gave me first-hand insights into life. The hard times also robbed me of living space and other basics of human life. Living in a refugee camp results in unnecessary suffering and in struggles that often lead to a total disruption of personality. For example, the life I was forced to lead turned me for a while into a thief, because I saw this as the only way to get any of the things that I needed to live.

Poetry slams. Open mic nights. Sculpture exhibitions. Music videos with social missions. Anataban stages a large and bewilderingly diversified range of events and activities. How do you at Anataban go about creating events? Does it all happen spontaneously? Is it motivated by concern about South Sudan and its people?

The first thing that everybody needs to know is that it not easy to stage a public event in South Sudan. And that's because of the requirement that each gathering of more than 10 people needs to obtain a security clearance in advance.

Why do we at Anataban offer such a diversity of events? The answer: because people in South Sudan like to be reached in such a diversity of ways. There are audiences for poetry, for drama, for visual arts, for fashion and even for pictorial/comic books.

We often do our activities on a rather spontaneous basis. A number, on the other hand, manifest our ongoing commitment to deal with developing crises and with issues of citizens' concern. These crises and concerns are often the the subject of our videos. Our latest covers the devastating oil pollution that is sweeping South Sudan. It is silently killing people.



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People in South Sudan like to be reached in a lot of art forms

Why did you decide to do “Black Tide”?

One of our core values is “We stand in solidarity with our suffering brothers and sisters.” South Sudan is rich in oil. That could be a blessing. The reason why it is not: it is being abused. And nothing good comes out of abuse.

The ministries and institutions responsible for oil have to do the right thing. They have to put human life and health first.

The reason why we made “Black Tide” is because the crisis is getting worse and worse every day. We are losing more lives every day – and this in a country that has been so heavily stricken by warfare. We the people of South Sudan need to move forward and take care of this problem – even if it means pumping less oil. What is most important is getting a cleaner environment, because that means a healthier society and that is what we so badly need.



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