The Anglican archbishop who was instrumental in delivering peace to Sudan has raised the spectre of full-blown war and appealed for restraint from the presidents of Sudan and South Sudan.

Archbishop Daniel Deng Bul Yak, leader of the Episcopal Church of Sudan, urged the two presidents to pursue peace in spite of the difficulties following the major clashes threatening the fragile peace that churches helped to broker in 2005.

In a statement released Monday, he wrote that he was deeply concerned that the conflict between the two countries has escalated close to full blown war. The current civil war began in 1983 and is one of the longest running conflicts in the world, costing nearly two million lives.

After a long history of violence and war since independence, a second major conflict broke out in 1983 between the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement and the Government of Sudan.

Archbishop Daniel’s statement comes at a low moment in the peace process. The signatories of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, the agreement which provided the path for the countries to separate last year, have lost momentum to follow through with their commitments.

Archbishop Daniel urged presidents Salva Kiir Mayardit and Omar Al Bashir not to lose the great amount of goodwill from their peoples shown during the process that led to the independence of South Sudan. He appealed to the people of both countries to refuse to be incited to return to war by their leaderships.

‘We should learn from the 55 years of war not to return to it so hastily. The blood of those who fought for peace should not have been poured in vain. We call on all sides to exercise restraint and pursue peace at all costs. God is on the side of those who seek peace.’

Unusually this week, as tensions both side of the border have reached a high, there have been attacks against Christian churches in Khartoum, Sudan’s capital. Christians and Muslims across the usually tolerant city have joined together in condemning the violence.