



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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South Sudan: Human Rights Council must listen to survivors

Speaking at the UN Human Rights Council today, Amnesty International thanked the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan for its update. The organisation said that it was concerned that the human rights concerns that necessitated the creation of the Commission in 2016 still persist. Crimes under international law continue to be perpetrated with impunity and the Commission remains the only independent mechanism able to collect and preserve evidence of these crimes. Amnesty International urged the Human Rights Council to renew the Commission's mandate.

Victims have a right to participate in decision-making that affects them. For years, Amnesty International has partnered with South Sudanese civil society working with victims who want their voices heard. A survivor leader wanted the Human Rights Council to hear the message that she told Amnesty International on behalf of other survivors. Due to high risks of reprisals, she was not able to address the Human Rights Council herself, so Amnesty International read her statement on her behalf.

"I am a survivor of rape in 2013. I live in a camp for internally displaced people (IDPs). Our leaders told us that a peace agreement was signed, but there is still too much insecurity. People living in the camps and outside face serious insecurity, people are killed. We lack basic services including food, water and medical services. Things have gotten very bad. Without security, refugees will not come back. IDPs will not leave the camps. People who fled, their houses have been taken over. Returning to those areas will only bring more problems.

We want the perpetrators to go to court, so that after the trials, we can forgive them, and they can apologize. We lost our properties and so many things during the 2013 conflict and we need to be compensated. So many South Sudanese were traumatised, and we need physical and mental treatment. Children who were born out of rape are not going to school and need support. We need to be empowered economically. We are tired of not seeing any change.

Mr. President,

If the Council wants to work for our country, you need to work with the people. When we cry, our leaders do not hear us. If you don't have a relative high up in government, you will get nothing. We urge all member states to listen to survivors and include and support us."

Amnesty International concluded by thanking the Human Rights Council.

Background

This public statement is based on an oral statement Amnesty International delivered to the Human Rights Council on 07 March 2023, during the enhanced interactive dialogue with the UN Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan.

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