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## ORAL STATEMENT

ITEM 4: Enhanced Interactive Dialogue on the Situation of Human Rights in South Sudan and Steps Taken by the Government to Ensure Accountability for Human Rights Violations and Abuses

### URGENT ACTION NEEDED TO END WIDESPREAD HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SOUTH SUDAN'S NEARLY FOUR-YEAR-OLD CONFLICT

UN Human Rights Council  
Thirty-sixth session  
11 – 29 September 2017

Mr. President,

Amnesty International welcomes resolutions (S-26/1) and (34/25) adopted by the Human Rights Council on the situation of human rights in South Sudan. It also welcomes the report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan published in March 2017.

These documents detail concerns Amnesty International has also raised, including those related to the spread of the conflict and related violations of international humanitarian law to previously peaceful areas, such as the Equatoria region, forced displacement, deliberate killings and widespread sexual violence against civilians.

Levels of sexual violence, in particular, have risen dramatically. Our organization has documented cases of rape, gang rape, sexual slavery, sexual mutilation, sexual torture, castration and forced nudity.<sup>1</sup> Since women are charged with maintaining food security in the household, many women are forced to make the choice between seeing their families starve in the relative safety of towns and protection of civilian sites or facing the higher risks that exist outside these locations in order to look for food and other basic items for themselves and their families.<sup>2</sup>

As our recent report on atrocities in the Equatoria region highlighted, both government and opposition forces have used access to food as a weapon of war as restricting civilian access to food provides a means to direct the movement of people and drive individuals out of their homes and off their land. This has turned the Equatoria region, once considered the 'breadbasket' of

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr65/6469/2017/en/>.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

South Sudan, into a killing field.<sup>3</sup>

The spread of the conflict and ongoing human rights abuses have resulted in new waves of forced displacement. For example, Uganda now hosts 1 million South Sudanese refugees.<sup>4</sup>

In line with the recommendations of the March 2017 Report, Amnesty International encourages the member states of the Human Rights Council to urge the Government of South Sudan to:

- Immediately cease all violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, allow for the prompt establishment of the Hybrid Court for South Sudan, and finally, work to create conditions that would enable the safe return of displaced people.

Thank you Mr. President.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr65/6612/2017/en/>.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2017/08/uganda-international-community-must-avert-growing-crisis-as-number-of-south-sudanese-refugees-reaches-a-million/>.