



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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Amnesty International Urges the UN Human Rights Council to Renew the Mandate of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan

Statement delivered during the Interactive Dialogue with the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan at the 37th Session of the Human Rights Council

Amnesty International is gravely concerned about the rapidly deteriorating human rights and humanitarian situation in South Sudan's now over four-year-old internal armed conflict. Since the conflict began on 15 December 2013, we have continuously documented violations of international human rights and international humanitarian law, including the deliberate killing of civilians, sexual violence on a massive scale, the denial of food as a weapon of war, widespread destruction of private and public property, large-scale forced displacement, prolonged and arbitrary detentions, torture and other inhumane treatment, and enforced disappearances.¹

The [recent report](#) of the Commission of Human Rights in South Sudan, which was released on 23 February 2018, shows unequivocally that these and other violations have persisted unabated and with impunity. Amnesty International shares the Commission's shock and outrage over the killing, rape, abduction, detention and other human rights violations against South Sudanese civilians committed by both government and opposition forces, often based on ethnicity.² We share the assessment of the Commission that some of the violations committed in the context of the conflict could amount to crimes against humanity. We have documented numerous war crimes by all sides.

We also share the Commission's concern about the denial of humanitarian access³. Our research has found that government and opposition forces have used food as a weapon of war, restricting civilian access to food and resources as a means to controlling population movement and forcing

¹ See, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/01/south-sudan-a-year-on-two-mens-whereabouts-unknown/>; <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2016/04/south-sudan-government-must-end-arbitrary-detentions-by-the-intelligence-agency/>; <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2016/05/south-sudan-dozens-of-detainees-at-risk-of-death-in-shipping-containers/>; <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr65/003/2014/en/>; <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr65/4486/2016/en/>; <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr65/3598/2016/en/>; <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr65/6612/2017/en/>; <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2017/06/south-sudan-government-forces-purge-civilians-from-upper-nile/>.

² <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr65/6469/2017/en/>.

³ <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G17/084/84/PDF/G1708484.pdf?OpenElement>, paragraph 1, page 3.

people to flee their homes.⁴

Amnesty is concerned that the Government's **National Security Services (NSS)** and **Military Intelligence Directorate** have continued to arbitrarily arrest and detain perceived government opponents in prolonged detention without charge or trial. Detention conditions are extraordinarily harsh and we believe that such conditions have led to multiple deaths.⁵ The NSS and Military Intelligence have also subjected people to enforced disappearance.⁶

At the UN Human Rights Council today, Amnesty called on the government and opposition forces in South Sudan to immediately cease all violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law and to ensure free and unfettered humanitarian access. We also urged the Government of South Sudan to cooperate with the African Union to ensure the Hybrid Court for South Sudan is established without delay, to end the climate of impunity that is fuelling ongoing violations.

Considering the horrors detailed in the report presented at the Human Rights Council, we called on the Council to ensure the renewal of the existing mandate of the Commission to allow it to continue its important work.

Background

The Human Rights Council established the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan on 23 March 2016 through resolution 31/20 for a period of one year. On 24 March 2017, the Human Rights Council extended the Commission's mandate for a period of one year with resolution 34/25. The Commission is due to present the findings of its report at the 37th Session of the Human Rights Council, which will take place from 26 February to 23 March 2018.

Amnesty International delivered the above oral statement at the Interactive Dialogue with the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan in Geneva. We also wrote publicly urging the Human Rights Council to renew the mandate of the Commission given continued violations:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr65/7934/2018/en/>.

⁴ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr65/4486/2016/en/>; <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr65/6612/2017/en/>.

⁵ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2016/05/south-sudan-dozens-of-detainees-at-risk-of-death-in-shipping-containers/>.

⁶ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr65/7744/2018/en/>.