



DEFENDDEFENDERS

East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project

UN Human Rights Council – 42nd regular session
Item 4: Interactive dialogue with the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan
Oral statement

Delivered by: Nicolas Agostini

Mr. President, dear Commissioners,

DefendDefenders thanks you for your update. The human rights situation in South Sudan continues to deserve priority attention from this Council and regional bodies and mechanisms.

We welcome the recent positive political developments in South Sudan, including the work being carried out by the National Constitutional Amendment Committee, and the committees composed of military and civilian actors formed to improve civil-military relations and support local justice and reconciliation in Yei River State. Additionally, we welcome the commitment to form a transitional Government by November 2019, following Riek Machar's recent visit to the country on 11 September 2019. We urge both camps to adhere to this commitment as formation of a unity government will go a long way towards building sustainable peace in the world's youngest nation.

However, we remain concerned about the limited efforts to address lack of accountability for human rights violations and abuses, including conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence, which remains widespread. Particularly, the failure to establish Chapter Five institutions, including the Hybrid Court, the Commission for Truth, Reconciliation, and Healing, and the Compensation and Reparations Authority is a setback to addressing impunity and ensuring justice for victims. It demonstrates the Government's disinterest in addressing issues pertaining to restoration and healing, including full rehabilitation of victims and the building of resilience and guarantees of non-recurrence, as civic space and human rights defenders are under pressure. All of these elements add to ongoing concern over delays in implementing transitional security arrangements under Chapter Two of the Revitalised Peace Agreement.

Ahead of this Council's 43rd session, when a resolution on South Sudan will be considered, we reiterate that there can be no lasting peace without justice.

Thank you for your attention.