



# DEFEND DEFENDERS

East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project

## UN Human Rights Council – 49<sup>th</sup> regular session

### Item 10: Interactive dialogue on the report of the High Commissioner on South Sudan

#### Oral statement

*Delivered by: Nicolas Agostini*

Mr. President, Madam High Commissioner,

We urge the Council to adopt draft resolution L.15, which extends the mandate of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan (CHRSS).

The report of the Commission, your own report, and the debate under item 4, which took place on 18 March 2022, outlined the gravity of the situation in South Sudan. We reiterate that what South Sudan needs is, first and foremost, *political will*. Without political will to address gross, widespread, and systematic human rights violations, all the technical assistance in the world will be futile and ineffective.

Mr. President,

The government claims that it is moving forward with the transitional justice institutions. Facts on the ground speak otherwise, as the government has failed to allocate funds for the technical committee on the establishment of the Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing (CTRH) to conduct initial public consultations. The Compensation and Reparation Authority (CRA) and the Hybrid Court remain a dream.

As the country is supposed to head for elections, it lacks an Election Law, an Electoral Commission, a census, and a permanent Constitution.

Instead, the government allocates resources (that is: *makes the political choice to allocate resources*) to the National Security Service to intensify its crackdown on independent voices. Additionally, as the CHRSS has reported, “staggering amounts of money and other wealth have been illicitly siphoned from South Sudan’s public coffers and resources.” Economic crimes have a direct, negative impact on the capacity of the state to meet its core socio-economic obligations, such as healthcare and education.

States should listen to the South Sudanese and African voices saying: it is too early for South Sudan to move to a purely technical assistance approach. The country needs a continued focus on scrutiny and accountability.

Thank you for your attention.