



DEFEND DEFENDERS

East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project

UN Human Rights Council – 50th regular session

Item 6: UPR outcome of South Sudan

Oral statement

Delivered by: Sworo Nelson Lo'boka

Mr. President,

We welcome the South Sudanese government's participation in the third cycle of the UPR. The UPR process complements, and should not replace, UN Human Rights Council action on South Sudan, including through the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan (CHRSS).

We welcome the government's acceptance of a large number of recommendations pertaining to, among other topics, ratification of human rights instruments, cooperation with UN mechanisms, implementation of the Revitalised Peace Agreement (R-ARCSS), and protection of civic space in the country.

We regret that while South Sudan committed to ratify CEDAW, CRPD and other instruments, it refused to do the same for the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the Convention on Enforced Disappearances.

We are particularly concerned about South Sudan's refusal to accept recommendation no. 113.88 ("Stop all forms of torture, enforced disappearances, arbitrary detentions and extrajudicial executions, and ensure accountability for human rights violations and abuses").

The government accepted recommendations to establish the Hybrid Court for South Sudan. When it comes to taking concrete steps to operationalise the Court, however, the government refused a recommendation to adopt its draft statute (no. 113.108).

The government accepted recommendations to protect human rights defenders and journalists and to respect fundamental freedoms (for instance, no. 113.125, 113.132, and 113.133). It also accepted recommendations offered by states from all regional groups to promote and protect civic space (for instance, no. 113.136, 113.143, 113.158, and 113.159). When it comes to specificity though, the government noted recommendations. This is clear as we look at recommendations to "cease the arbitrary detention of [...] human rights defenders, journalists and activists" (no. 113.137), "stop the harassment of, threats against, and arbitrary arrests and detentions of human rights defenders, journalists and critics [...]" (no. 113.150), or "put an end to the harassment, unlawful detainment and intimidation of journalists and civil society actors by the national security services" (no. 113.152).

I thank you for your attention.