



DEFEND DEFENDERS

East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project

UN Human Rights Council – 54th regular session

Item 10: Interactive dialogue on the High Commissioner's
oral update on technical assistance and capacity-building for South Sudan

Oral statement

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Mr. President, Mr. High Commissioner,

We thank you for your update. Last year, at the Council's 51st session, we [asked](#): Will the [extension](#) of South Sudan's transitional period be used to adopt an inclusive election law, establish an independent electoral commission, conduct a national census, and adopt a permanent Constitution? Or will it be used to buy more time and further delay the implementation of the Revitalised Peace Agreement?

As South Sudan prepares for elections, officially set for December 2024, major challenges stand in its path. The absence of key institutions raises alarming concerns. Escalating violence in Upper Nile exemplifies the potential for pre-election unrest. Sexual violence against women and girls remains widespread. Crucial legislation, including the national elections bill, has made limited progress within the Parliament. The political party registration system remains undeveloped.

There has been a recent decrease in armed clashes, but South Sudan's security situation remains fragile. Ongoing challenges have been intensified by the Sudan crisis, worsening the humanitarian situation.

While we acknowledge promises to amend the NSS Act, we are concerned about overbroad powers for the National Security Service and impunity for its agents, and we call for an urgent revision of the Act to halt abuses. South Sudan's civic space continues to shrink. This is evidenced by reprisals against human rights defenders and journalists, censorship, arbitrary arrests, disappearances, acts of torture, and extrajudicial killings.

Mr. President,

Overcoming the obstacles facing South Sudan in the lead-up to the elections and the completion of the transitional period necessitates political commitment. Technical assistance and capacity-building will never be a substitute. Ahead of HRC55, we will once again call for the extension of the mandate of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan ([CHRSS](#)).

Thank you.