



DEFEND DEFENDERS

East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project

UN Human Rights Council – 55th regular session

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

Oral statement

Delivered by: Nicolas Agostini

Mr. President, Mr. High Commissioner,

We thank you for your report. Once again, we have to take the floor to highlight our deep concerns over the situation in South Sudan.

Ahead of the Council's 55th session, 91 NGOs **called** for an extension of the mandate of the UN Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan (CHRSS) in full. We highlighted that beyond advisory services, South Sudan needs investigations, collection and preservation of evidence, and accountability.

We highlighted that as South Sudan is preparing for its first-ever national elections, in December 2024, significant concerns and risk factors of violence and further human rights violations and abuses exist.

We highlighted that eight years on, the Commission's work remains vital as the conditions that prompted the Council to establish it, in 2016, have not significantly changed.

Mr. President,

To be clear: No one opposes the provision of advisory services to South Sudan, or reporting under item 10. What we say is technical assistance alone is not sufficient or adequate to address the country's challenges. To improve its human rights record, South Sudan first and foremost needs *political will*.

Without political will to address violations and impunity, to establish and operationalize key institutions, and to impose checks and balances on those holding political authority, all the technical assistance in the world will be futile and ineffective.

Finally, Mr. President, with the above in mind, we call on the Council, in line with its prevention mandate, to stand ready to respond to any developments on the ground.

Thank you.