



DEFEND DEFENDERS

East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project

UN Human Rights Council – 58th regular session

Item 2: Enhanced interactive dialogue on the report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan

Oral statement

Delivered by: Memory Bandera

Mr. President, Commissioners,

We thank you for your report.

Ahead of this session, over 100 organisations **urged** the Council to adopt a resolution on the human rights situation in South Sudan. Beyond the specific asks they formulated, including extending the mandate of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan (CHRSS) in full for two years, they stressed the need for the Council to send a strong message to all South Sudanese parties after a new extension of the transitional period and a new postponement of the country's national elections.

These delays reflect South Sudanese leaders' failure to implement the 2018 revitalised peace agreement and to deliver on their commitment to usher in a new era for the country. They confirm the authorities' flagrant disregard for the condition of South Sudanese citizens.

South Sudan stands at a critical moment. It is facing a political, institutional, security, humanitarian, economic, and human rights crisis. Among the issues highlighted in the civil society letter, we stress the need for maximum pressure over the National Security Service (NSS), an abusive agency directly under the authority of the President, which saw its unchecked arbitrary powers confirmed in 2024. The NSS's authority to arrest and detain anyone with or without a warrant on the basis of vaguely-defined national security offences presents a formidable obstacle to an open civic and democratic space and to free, fair, secure, and credible elections.

Commissioners:

At this juncture, as risk factors of further violence and atrocities multiply, we stress the importance of your mandate not only with regard to accountability, but also in relation to the Council's prevention mandate. Your work is truly vital.

What strategy can be used to ensure that the mechanisms envisioned in Chapter V of the revitalised agreement, namely the Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing (CTRH), the Compensation and Reparation Authority (CRA) and the Hybrid Court for South Sudan (HCSS), are all established and operationalised at the same time, as part of a holistic transitional justice effort?

Thank you.