



United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)

Media & Spokesperson Unit
Communications & Public Information Office

PRESS RELEASE

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Widespread human rights abuses by all sides as South Sudan peace process gets underway

JUBA/GENEVA (21 January 2016) –Widespread human rights violations and abuses have been committed in South Sudan by all parties to the conflict since December 2013, including hundreds of extra-judicial killings, enforced disappearances, sexual violence, forced recruitment and indiscriminate attacks against civilians, according to a UN report published today.

The report, by the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), shows that “very few places in areas of conflict have been safe, as the parties have intentionally attacked traditional safe havens, such as places of worship, hospitals and, from time to time, United Nations bases.”

These attacks reveal a shocking disregard for civilian life, the report says, with an increasing number of armed groups and communities being involved in the violence. “From the middle of 2015, a new pattern emerged, particularly in the central and southern counties of Unity State, with entire villages being burned down, food crops destroyed and livestock looted. There are indications that this may have been a deliberate strategy by the government or the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) aimed at depriving civilians of any source of livelihood with a view to forcing their displacement,” says the report.

The report documents at least 280 cases of conflict-related sexual violence, including gang-rape, sexual slavery and forced abortion. There has also been sharp increase in child recruitment, with at least 13,000 to 15,000 child soldiers, recruited mainly, but not solely, by opposition forces, as of December 2015.

“The constant attacks on women, the rape, enslavement and slaughter of innocents; the recruitment of thousands upon thousands of child soldiers; the deliberate displacement of vast numbers of people in such a harsh and poverty-stricken country -- these are abhorrent practices that must be halted,” said UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein.

“Accountability and justice sound like empty words in such a bleak landscape, but they are essential if South Sudan is to come out of this terrible period,” Zeid added. “The current regional and international peace efforts offer some hope that this perpetual cycle of bloodshed and misery can be brought to an end, and I urge all sides to negotiate in good faith.”

The report can be access at:

bit.ly/1RV1Jnu

http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/SS/UNMISS_HRD4December2015.pdf

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