

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN
MINISTRY OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS



Office of the Minister

Your Ref.....

Date 4th April 2025

Our Ref: RSS/MOJ&CA/J/OM/2025

Response of the Government of the Republic of South Sudan to the UNMISS-Human Rights Division of the Annual Brief on Violence Affecting Civilians from January to December, 2024

Introduction

The Government of the Republic of South Sudan has perused the Annual Brief prepared by UNMISS- Human Rights Division for the period from January to December 2024. This brief presents an overview of the trends and problem of violence affecting civilians as mentioned in the year 2024. The “Annual Brief on Violence Affecting Civilians is used as an advocacy tool by UNMISS to create awareness on the impact of violence on the civilians”, which the Government consider it as a general overview of the country situation. However, the Government would like to state that the Annual Brief is not free from procedural errors and challenges. These errors include unwillingness of the alleged complainers to come forward to testify, monitoring and investigation challenges, making the allegation in the Annual Brief unverifiable, hence is tainted, in its substance.

Sexual Violence Trends

Despite of challenges, especially limited number of police investigators, public prosecutors and judges, the Government through mobile courts, General Court Martial and the Gender-based Violence and Juvenile Courts, prosecuted several cases. In January to December 2024, the Gender-based Violence and Juvenile Courts alone received about three hundred and fifty-four (354) cases, sixty-eight (68) cases were tried, and sixty (60) are undergoing further investigations and possible trials. The Government, with the support from international partners, constructed court rooms and offices in Renk in Upper Nile State and Pibor Administrative Area for police, public prosecutors and judges. Furthermore, recently, the Government has deployed more prosecutors and judges.

Communal Violence Trends

On the reported communal violence situations in Western Equatoria State, the Government formed a General Court Martial (GCM) to try some of the reported cases, including conflicts related to sexual violence and gender based-violence (SGBV), especially those cases that were committed by members of the security forces, while on duty. The Court conducted trials in presence of eight (8) civilian lawyers and involvement of police investigators, tried and convicted fourteen (14) cases. The charges range from murder, rape and aggravated robbery. The GCM Court identifies twenty-five (25) victims who appeared before the Court. These victims were inhabitants of Yambio, EZO, Tamura, Nzara, Ibba, Mundri East and Mundri West. Sentences imposed by the Court ranges from five (5) years to life imprisonment, with fine or both, including reparation to the victims.

In Central Equatoria State, the Mobile and CGM Courts also tried cases involving members of the South Sudan Peoples' Defence Forces (SSPDF). The offense includes cases of abduction and cattle rustling. In Jonglei State and Pibor Administrative Area, the Government and the traditional leaders (chiefs) conducted peace conferences to reconcile the communities. It is the same case with Eastern Equatoria State. In Warrap State, the Government, traditional leaders (chiefs) and UNMISS-Civil and Political Affairs, conducted several community-based peace conference and mediations. The conferences resulted in mitigation of the recurring community violence in these States. To improve the situation further, the Government also removed from office the Governor of Western Equatoria State, Governor of Warrap State and the Chief Administrator of Pibor Administrative Area.

Protection of Children

The Government remains committed to implement and enforce its international treaty obligations and its national laws, by promoting and protecting child rights. As of late 2024, the SSPDF in Maridi in Western Equatoria State, while integrating former combatants, released children associated with SPLA-IO. In addition, the Ministry of Defence and Veterans Affairs conducted a public awareness on the child rights. The Government also trained one-hundred and fifty (150) SSPDF personnel, who were mobilized from ten (10) States and three (3) Administrative Areas.

Conclusion

The Government would like to state that the allegations and data provided in the UNMISS-Human Rights Division of the Annual Brief on Violence Affecting Civilians especially on number of reported victims, communal violence and child rights violation are with technical errors and not accurate. The data in the Annual Brief does not reflect the current situation in the country. Some of the alleged human rights violations were either resolved through trials or dismissal of the administrator(s) involved or caused these human rights violations such as the current cases in Jonglei State, Warrap State, Western Equatoria State, Western Behr El- Ghazal State, Upper Nile State and Pibor Administrative Area. These former administrators were relieved as a way of addressing the alleged human rights violations. The Government would like also to state that it is irrational that all victims of the alleged human violations were not able to come forward to report

the human rights violations, committed against them to the authorities, including the police or Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs.

Therefore, to improve monitoring of the human rights, the Government would like to state that the UNMISS-Human Rights Division should share their findings with the Government, especially the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, for verification and prosecution of the alleged human rights cases.

Dr. Wek Mamer Kuol (MP)
Minister,
Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs
Republic of South Sudan
RSS/Juba.

