

R2P MONITOR

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the Global Centre for the
Responsibility to Protect

The **Responsibility to Protect** (R2P) is a global norm, unanimously adopted by heads of state and government at the 2005 UN World Summit, aimed at preventing and halting Genocide, War Crimes, Ethnic Cleansing and Crimes Against Humanity. R2P stipulates that:

- » Every State has the Responsibility to Protect its populations from the four mass atrocity crimes (Pillar I).
- » The wider international community has the responsibility to encourage and assist individual States in meeting that responsibility (Pillar II).
- » If a State is manifestly failing to protect its populations, the international community must be prepared to take appropriate collective action, in a timely and decisive manner and in accordance with the UN Charter (Pillar III).

R2P Monitor applies the Responsibility to Protect lens to the following situations of concern:

CURRENT CRISIS

Mass atrocity crimes are occurring and urgent action is needed.

IMMINENT RISK

The situation is reaching a critical threshold and the risk of mass atrocity crimes occurring in the immediate future is very high if effective preventive action is not taken.

SERIOUS CONCERN

There is a significant risk of occurrence, or recurrence, of mass atrocity crimes within the foreseeable future if effective action is not taken.

R2P Monitor:

- » Provides *background* on populations at risk of mass atrocity crimes, with particular emphasis on key events and actors and their connection to the threat, or commission, of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.
- » Offers *analysis* of the country's past history in relation to mass atrocity crimes; the factors that have enabled their possible commission, or that prevent their resolution; and the receptivity of the situation to positive influences that would assist in preventing further crimes.
- » Tracks the *international response* to the situation with a particular emphasis upon the actions of the United Nations (UN), key regional actors and the International Criminal Court (ICC).
- » Suggests *necessary action* to prevent or halt the commission of mass atrocity crimes.

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CURRENT CRISIS

Mass atrocity crimes are occurring and urgent action is needed.



270,000+
people killed

6.6 million IDPs

13.5 million in need
of assistance

SYRIA

Populations continue to face mass atrocity crimes committed by state security forces and affiliated militias in Syria's ongoing civil war. Various armed opposition groups and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant are also committing war crimes and crimes against humanity.

BACKGROUND

After five years of conflict in Syria, a fragile cessation of hostilities, brokered by the United States and Russia, came into effect on 27 February. While the cessation drastically reduced violence, fighting has increased around Aleppo since mid-April, when the government launched an offensive to retake the city. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) reported that 170 civilians were killed during the first month of the cessation, while 860 civilians were killed during April. In Idlib, a 19 April market bombing killed at least 44 people. On 27 April government planes bombed Al Quds hospital in Aleppo, killing at least 50 people. On 5 May at least 30 people were killed in government air strikes on a displacement camp near Sarmada, Idlib.

The cessation was also enabling a UN-backed humanitarian task force to deliver desperately-needed aid to besieged areas throughout the country, but as the cessation neared collapse the Syrian government began blocking humanitarian access. The government has routinely obstructed the delivery of cross-border humanitarian aid throughout the conflict, contravening UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolutions 2165 and 2191.

A third round of indirect talks between Syrian government and opposition factions began in Geneva on 13 April, mediated by the UN Special Envoy to Syria, Staffan de Mistura. Amidst escalating violations of the cessation, the opposition's High Negotiation Committee suspended its role in the talks on 18 April, while the Free Syrian Army and other rebel groups announced they would resume joint operations.

Syria faces a potential return to widespread hostilities in which all sides have committed mass atrocities. Five years of conflict in Syria has resulted in over 270,000 people killed. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported that as of 25 April there were over 4.8 million Syrian refugees and at least 6.6 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) – the largest number of people displaced by any conflict in the world. Over 13.5 million Syrians are in need of protection and humanitarian assistance. All parties to the conflict have impeded humanitarian access to vulnerable civilians, with 4.5 million Syrians in inaccessible areas, some 400,000 of whom are living under siege. The UN Secretary-General has accused all sides of using starvation as a weapon of war.

The UN Human Rights Council-mandated Commission of Inquiry (CoI) asserted in its 22 February report that crimes against humanity have been committed by government forces as a matter of state policy. The government has conducted airstrikes in residential areas, contravening UNSC Resolution 2139, which demanded all parties cease attacks on civilians and the use of indiscriminate weapons. The Syrian Network for Human Rights reported that 17,318 barrel bombs were dropped in Syria during 2015, killing 2,032 people.

Syrian government-allied militias have committed large-scale massacres and perpetrated war crimes and gross violations of international humanitarian law (IHL). The CoI has reported that pro-government forces have conducted widespread attacks on the population, committing crimes against humanity, including "extermination, murder, rape or other forms of sexual violence, torture, imprisonment, enforced disappearance and other inhuman acts."

Several armed opposition groups have also committed war crimes, violated IHL and targeted religious minorities for attack. The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) poses a direct threat to civilians as its fighters have carried out crimes against humanity, including mass killings and sexual enslavement, in areas under their control. According to the SOHR, between June 2014 and March 2016 ISIL executed 4,064 people, including 2,200 civilians. An international coalition is currently conducting airstrikes against ISIL in Syria. The SOHR reported that at least 4,700 ISIL fighters and 380 civilians were killed during coalition airstrikes between September 2014 and March 2016.

Russia commenced airstrikes in Syria on 30 September, claiming it would target ISIL. However, most airstrikes have targeted other opposition forces. The SOHR reported on 31 March that Russian airstrikes had killed 1,869 civilians, including over 440 children. On 14 March President Vladimir Putin ordered a partial withdrawal of Russian forces from Syria.

Saudi Arabia and Qatar are providing arms to some rebel groups. Meanwhile, Iran continues to provide crucial economic, military and political support to the Syrian government. Hezbollah has

directly engaged in fighting against Syrian rebels on both sides of the Syria-Lebanon border. The CoI reported on 22 February that the "overwhelming yet consistent intensification of external military involvement in Syria" was having "devastating consequences for civilians."

The CoI and UN Secretary-General have called for the situation in Syria to be referred to the ICC. On 29 April the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights argued that, "the persistent failure of the Security Council to refer the situation in Syria to the [ICC] is an example of the most shameful form of *realpolitik*."

ANALYSIS

With all sides in Syria committed to an outright military victory, the lives of countless civilians are imperiled by the ongoing civil war. The cessation of hostilities is vital to the protection of civilians and the stalled peace talks. The reescalation of armed hostilities will severely compromise the dim possibility of productive negotiations to end the conflict.

The government, with support from its allies, continues to utilize its military resources to retain power at all costs and perpetrate crimes against humanity and war crimes against armed rebels and populations presumed to be supporting them. Russian airstrikes have enabled the government to regain significant territory previously lost to rebel forces.

The fracturing and radicalization of the opposition compounds the difficulty of achieving a negotiated political settlement. ISIL, which is not part of the peace talks, and several other armed groups continue to pose a direct threat to civilians, especially those from minority religious communities.

External political influence upon the Syrian government, via the UN and regional actors, remains weak. Despite adopting several resolutions concerning humanitarian access and chemical weapons, the UNSC has been unable to enforce their compliance, with significant divisions over Syria evident amongst the permanent members.

The government of Syria has not only manifestly failed to uphold its Responsibility to Protect, it bears primary responsibility for the ongoing commission of mass atrocity crimes.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

Following the outbreak of violence during March 2011, the international community responded by censuring the regime for its widespread violations of human rights. Despite this, the UNSC has failed to adequately respond to the conflict in Syria and to meet its obligations under the UN Charter. [For responses prior to November 2015 see [GCR2P's Timeline of International Response to the Situation in Syria](#).]

Since 14 November the International Syria Support Group (ISSG) – including the UN, European Union (EU), League of Arab States and other countries – has met four times, agreeing on the need to convene Syrian government and opposition representatives in formal negotiations under UN auspices.

On 18 December 2015, following the third meeting of the ISSG, the UNSC unanimously adopted Resolution 2254, endorsing a road map for a peace process, including a nationwide ceasefire and accelerating the delivery of humanitarian aid. On 22 December 2015 the UNSC passed Resolution 2258, demanding that all parties comply with their obligations under IHL and renewing for 12 months the decisions of Resolution 2165, authorizing cross-border humanitarian access. Resolutions 2254 and 2258 both reiterate the primary responsibility of the Syrian government to protect populations.

On 26 February the UNSC unanimously adopted Resolution 2268, endorsing the 22 February cessation of hostilities agreement and calling upon all sides to allow humanitarian agencies unrestricted access to populations.

The UN Human Rights Council has adopted 16 resolutions condemning atrocities in Syria. The latest, adopted on 18 March, stressed that the primary responsibility to protect the Syrian population lies with the Syrian authorities.

On 5 May the UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Stephen O'Brien, condemned the airstrike on a displacement camp in Idlib, saying it may amount to a war crime and calling for an immediate investigation. On 12 May the UNSC issued a Press Statement expressing outrage at attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure, as well as indiscriminate attacks, stressing that these actions may amount to war crimes. The UNSC also reaffirmed the "primary responsibility of the Syrian government to protect the population in Syria."

NECESSARY ACTION

Syrian government forces and armed opposition groups must facilitate immediate and unimpeded humanitarian access to civilians trapped or displaced by fighting, in keeping with UNSC Resolutions 2139, 2165 and 2258. The international community must intensify efforts towards finding a potential political solution to the conflict while increasing assistance to populations already affected by the civil war.

The UNSC needs to take proximate steps to end atrocities in Syria, including imposing an arms embargo and referring the situation to the ICC. The UNSC must take expeditious action to end the use of chemical weapons and other indiscriminate and illegal weapons and hold all perpetrators accountable.

Russia, Iran and Hezbollah must cease enabling the crimes of the Syrian government. Countries opposed to the rule of President Bashar Al-Assad must withhold all support from armed groups who commit war crimes or target minority communities. States participating in airstrikes in Syria must ensure all necessary precautions are taken to avoid civilian casualties and uphold IHL.

Russia and the United States need to press their respective allies to consolidate the cessation of hostilities and agree to a permanent ceasefire in conjunction with meaningful negotiations over how to fundamentally resolve Syria's conflict.

MORE INFORMATION

- » [Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Syria](#), 22 February 2016
- » [UNSC Resolution, S/RES/2268](#), 26 February 2016
- » [Statement by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, OCHA](#), 5 May 2016
- » [GCR2P Populations at Risk: Syria](#)



3.4 million displaced
since January 2014

3 million Iraqis living
under ISIL control

IRAQ

The extremist armed group the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant is committing war crimes and crimes against humanity in Iraq. As the Iraqi Security Forces, Shia militias and Kurdish fighters confront ISIL, civilians remain at risk of further mass atrocity crimes.

BACKGROUND

The security situation in Iraq remains dire as a result of ongoing attacks by ISIL, who have declared a caliphate spanning Syria and Iraq. Widespread fighting between the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and ISIL, as well as several other armed groups, has also led to sectarian violence and gross human rights abuses. The UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) reported that 410 civilians were killed in acts of terrorism, violence and armed conflict during April. Over 7,000 civilians were killed during 2015.

OCHA estimates that as of 9 April, 10 million people in Iraq – nearly one third of the population – are in need of humanitarian assistance, with 3.4 million people internally displaced since January 2014. OCHA also reported that at least 3 million Iraqis are living under ISIL control, including 60,000 civilians besieged in Falluja since December 2015, and facing widespread food shortages. ISIL has reportedly killed civilians attempting to leave Fallujah and continues to seize humanitarian aid for its own fighters.

ISIL continues to systematically attack and persecute vulnerable ethnic and religious minority communities, including Christians, Shabak, Yazidis and Turkmen, causing their mass displacement. Iraq's Defense Minister claimed that ISIL had killed an estimated

2,000 civilians in Nineveh province by 7 August 2015, one year after beginning its systematic attacks on ethnic and religious minorities. The International Organization for Migration reported that by the end of 2015, 143,000 families had been displaced from Nineveh. More than 3,500 women, mainly Yazidi, also remain enslaved by ISIL.

ISIL also routinely targets Shia neighborhoods in bombings. On 1 May two ISIL suicide bombs killed at least 33 people in Samawa, Muthanna province. On 11 May a car bomb in an outdoor market in Sadr City, Baghdad, killed over 60 people, while car bombs in two other neighborhoods killed at least 25 people, marking ISIL's deadliest series of attacks this year.

UNAMI and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) have reported that ISIL's violations, which include targeted killings, forced conversions, slavery and sexual abuse, "may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity and possibly genocide." On 17 March United States Secretary of State John Kerry declared that ISIL is committing genocide against Christians, Yazidis and Shiites.

On 29 December Prime Minister Abadi declared the ISF had recaptured the city of Ramadi, Anbar province, from ISIL after seven months. On 27 January the government reported uncovering a mass grave in Ramadi containing at least 40 bodies, including women and children, killed by ISIL.

The United States has been conducting airstrikes against ISIL in Iraq since 8 August 2014, following the Iraqi government's request for assistance after the group seized the northern town of Sinjar, threatening genocide to the minority Yazidi community. ISIL killed at least 500 Yazidis and abducted 1,500 women and girls. Since then Australia, Belgium, Denmark, France, Jordan, Netherlands and United Kingdom have joined the military coalition against ISIL in Iraq, with some also participating in airstrikes on ISIL in Syria.

Responding to sectarian terrorist attacks and the rise of ISIL, Shia militias have carried out violent reprisals against Sunni civilians, including abduction, killing and destruction of their property. The ISF has also been accused of extrajudicial killings, illegal detention, torture and other violations of IHL and international human rights law (IHRL). On 4 December OHCHR expressed concern at reports of forced evictions and extrajudicial killings committed by Iraqi and Kurdish security forces and affiliated militias "against Sunni Arab communities in parts of Iraq that have been reclaimed from ISIL." Amnesty International reported on 20 January that Kurdish Peshmerga forces have destroyed thousands of homes of perceived ISIL "sympathizers" across 13 towns and villages in northern Iraq, possibly amounting to war crimes.

ANALYSIS

ISIL poses an existential threat to ethnic and religious minorities, who face the risk of further mass atrocities, as well as a direct threat to members of the majority Shia community. ISIL has consistently failed to protect civilians in areas under military

occupation and is committed to the eradication of all religious communities and minority cultures that do not conform to its strict interpretation of Islam.

Despite a November 2010 power-sharing agreement between political parties representing Shias, Sunnis and Kurds, many Sunnis felt marginalized under former President Nouri al-Maliki. The government's violent response to a Sunni protest movement that started in December 2012 further aggravated these divisions. ISIL exploited widespread disaffection to build alliances with Sunni tribes and seize large swathes of territory and resources. Cultural identities and religious loyalties continue to be manipulated by various political forces in Iraq. Some Shia militias, mobilized by the government to fight ISIL, pose a direct threat to Sunni civilians.

There are grave fears for the fate of civilians who continue to be trapped by fighting between ISIL and the ISF and allied Shia militias. Human rights violations continue to be perpetrated by the ISF, who often commit abuses in the name of counterterrorism.

The Iraqi government is unable to uphold its Responsibility to Protect and needs ongoing international assistance.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

In addition to United States support to the Iraqi government, several EU member states, as well as Albania and Canada, have provided ongoing assistance to Kurdish fighters battling ISIL.

On 16 December the UNSC issued a Presidential Statement deploring all acts of human trafficking by ISIL, including for the purpose of sexual slavery and forced labor, emphasizing that these acts constitute war crimes. On 12 May the UNSC issued a Press Statement condemning the 11 May terrorist attacks in Baghdad and lamenting that the victims "are a sad addition to the thousands of Iraqi civilians killed this year."

NECESSARY ACTION

The international community should continue to provide support to the Iraqi government to combat the threat ISIL poses to vulnerable populations, especially religious and ethnic minorities. While confronting ISIL and other armed groups, the government must protect civilians and address the underlying sources of conflict between Sunnis, Shias and Kurds in Iraq. The government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government must strictly uphold their obligations under IHL.

The government must actively prevent reprisals against Sunni civilians in areas recaptured from ISIL. IDPs also require urgent humanitarian assistance. Iraq's international supporters must ensure that the ISF and Kurdish forces strictly and consistently comply with their obligations under international law. The Kurdistan Regional Government is also in need of international support to defend vulnerable populations from ongoing ISIL attacks.

All members of the international anti-ISIL coalition must abide by IHL and take all necessary measures to mitigate the risk to civilians.

MORE INFORMATION

- » [UNAMI Website](#)
- » [Casualty Figures](#), UNAMI, 1 May 2016
- » ["Report on Kurdish abuses in northern Iraq," Amnesty International](#), 20 January 2016
- » [GCR2P Populations at Risk: Iraq](#)



21 million people in
need of humanitarian
assistance

2.7 million people
displaced by violence

YEMEN

Mass atrocity crimes are being committed in Yemen as a regional military coalition and pro-government forces fight against Houthi rebels, who have taken control of much of the country.

BACKGROUND

Despite an 11 April ceasefire and political negotiations between the government and Houthis that began in Kuwait on 21 April, the conflict in Yemen continues to leave civilians facing mass atrocity crimes. On 1 May the government withdrew from negotiations, citing increasing violations of the ceasefire after the Houthis seized a military base north of the capital, Sana'a. The UN Special Envoy to Yemen, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, restarted the talks on 3 May.

During 2014, amidst a UN-facilitated political transition process, the Houthis, an armed Shia movement from northeast Yemen, and military units loyal to former President Ali Abdullah Saleh, took control of the governorates of Saada, Hodeida, Dhamar, Amran and Sana'a. On 26 March 2015 Saudi Arabia and a coalition of nine other countries responded to a government request for regional military intervention. Growing violence forced President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi to seek temporary refuge in Riyadh. Despite recent military setbacks, Houthis and pro-Saleh forces still control much of Yemen, including Sana'a.

Violence between Houthi rebels and various pro-government forces, as well as months of sustained Saudi-led coalition airstrikes, have resulted in more than 3,200 civilians killed, including 900 children, since March 2015. According to OCHA, the majority of the violence has taken place in populated areas. More than 2.7 million Yemeni civilians have been forcibly displaced while an estimated 21.2 million people, over 82 percent of the population, require humanitarian assistance. The UN Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) has reported on the particularly dire effect of the conflict on women and children.

Houthi and government-allied forces have both targeted civilian infrastructure and international humanitarian workers. The UN Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Kyung-wha Kang, reported that between March 2015 and April 2016 more than 170 schools and 70 health facilities were destroyed. The Houthis have also been accused of indiscriminately shelling civilian areas while Saudi airstrikes have reportedly included banned cluster munitions. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has reported that Saudi-led airstrikes have caused a disproportionate number of civilian deaths and has said that the distinction between civilian and military targets by both sides has been "woefully inadequate."

The UN and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) have made numerous attempts to broker peace between parties to the conflict. The UN Special Envoy noted that the latest ceasefire was "70-80 percent respected," highlighting the critical role played by UN-sanctioned De-escalation and Coordination Committees and Local De-escalation Committees.

Other armed groups have also taken advantage of the conflict to perpetrate violence against civilians. Since March 2015 ISIL has claimed responsibility for a series of attacks on Shia mosques and detonated car bombs in Sana'a, while Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) has gained influence, perpetrating terrorist attacks and taking control of several cities.

ANALYSIS

All sides of the conflict have perpetrated indiscriminate attacks and targeted civilian infrastructure, amounting to possible war crimes and crimes against humanity. The use of banned cluster munitions and the worsening humanitarian crisis further threaten civilian lives. Failure to abide by the cessation and attempts to subvert the political transition are in violation of various UNSC resolutions.

Yemen has become another proxy battlefield between Saudi Arabia and Iran. While Saudi Arabia remains the main force backing the regional military coalition, Iran has allegedly provided substantial military assistance to the Houthis.

Fighting between Houthi rebels and pro-government forces threatens to further fracture Yemeni society along tribal and sectarian lines. Terrorist groups, such as AQAP and ISIL, are trying to exploit tensions between Shia and Sunni populations to increase their influence.

The Yemeni government is unable to uphold its Responsibility to Protect and requires international support.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

In 2011 the UNSC adopted Resolution 2014, which condemned human rights violations by the government of former President Ali Abdullah Saleh and affirmed Yemen's primary responsibility to protect its population.

The UNSC imposed sanctions on former President Saleh and Houthi leaders in November 2014 and has extended the mandate of the Panel of Experts on Yemen until 27 March 2017. On 15 February 2015 the UNSC unanimously adopted Resolution 2201, condemning the armed takeover of the capital and demanding the Houthis withdraw.

On 14 April 2015 the UNSC passed Resolution 2216, establishing an arms embargo against Houthi leaders and some supporters of former President Saleh, and demanding full implementation of previous resolutions. On 24 February 2016 the UNSC renewed the sanctions regime for an additional year.

On 2 February the International Development Committee of the United Kingdom's House of Commons urged the government to cease the sale of arms to Saudi Arabia in response to allegations that ongoing airstrikes were destroying civil infrastructure and killing civilians. On 25 February the European Parliament passed a resolution on the Humanitarian Situation in Yemen, including an amendment calling for an arms embargo on Saudi Arabia.

The UN Special Advisers for the Prevention of Genocide and Responsibility to Protect issued a statement on 17 February calling upon the international community - and particularly on the UNSC - to help end the Yemen conflict. The Special Advisers also urged all parties to the Arms Trade Treaty to respect their treaty commitments.

On 25 April the UNSC issued a Presidential Statement welcoming the cessation of hostilities and the start of the peace talks.

NECESSARY ACTION

The distinction between military and civilian targets is central to IHL and must be adhered to. Parties to the conflict must halt the use of illegal and indiscriminate weapons, including banned cluster munitions. All parties must uphold their Responsibility to Protect vulnerable populations regardless of their tribal, religious or political affiliations.

All parties to the conflict must respect agreed ceasefires in order to ensure humanitarian access to vulnerable civilians in desperate need of food, water and medical supplies. Parties to the conflict should also support the full establishment of Local De-escalation Committees.

The UNSC, GCC and all parties to the conflict need to ensure that Resolutions 2201 and 2216 are fully implemented and that Yemen returns to the political transition process. The government and Houthis must not allow ceasefire violations to

derail negotiations and recommit to fulfilling UNSC Resolution 2216. The UN Human Rights Council should establish an international commission of inquiry to investigate serious violations of IHL and IHRL in Yemen since March 2015.

MORE INFORMATION

- » [UNSC Resolution, S/RES/2266](#), 24 February 2016
- » [UNSC Presidential Statement, S/PRST/2016/5](#), 25 April 2016
- » [GCR2P Populations at Risk: Yemen](#)



2.6 million IDPs
in Darfur

1.2 million displaced or
in need of aid in South
Kordofan and Blue Nile

SUDAN

Populations in South Kordofan, Blue Nile and Darfur continue to face mass atrocity crimes perpetrated by the Sudanese Armed Forces, affiliated militias and armed rebel groups.

BACKGROUND

For nearly five years the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and armed rebels of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) have been engaged in hostilities in South Kordofan and Blue Nile, directly threatening vulnerable civilians. The government of Sudan continues to prohibit access to South Kordofan and Blue Nile and is systematically preventing aid from reaching populations at risk of starvation. According to OCHA, since June 2011 the conflict has resulted in over 1.2 million people "internally displaced or severely affected and in need of humanitarian assistance," while more than 246,500 have fled to South Sudan and Ethiopia.

Following several failed negotiations, the African Union (AU) High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) for Sudan proposed a Roadmap Agreement which establishes a framework to halt the conflicts in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile. On 23 March the Chair of the AU Commission welcomed the signing of the agreement by the Sudanese government and called on opposition groups to endorse the Roadmap by 28 March, but the main opposition groups have announced they will not sign.

There has been a reported escalation in fighting with ground offensives and aerial bombardments across South Kordofan and Blue Nile. The SPLM-N accused the government of repeatedly bombing Wagari, Blue Nile, on 28 March. Heavy fighting was reported near Kauda, South Kordofan, on 30 March as the SAF launched an offensive to seize rebel-held areas. Indiscriminate aerial bombardments were reported during April around Heiban and Um Dorein, resulting in civilian casualties and the displacement of approximately 20,000 people.

Sudan has consistently failed to honor AU-brokered agreements and UNSC resolutions calling for a cessation of hostilities. This includes the failure to end aerial bombardments, disarm pro-government militias and allow humanitarian access. The SAF has committed war crimes, including extrajudicial killing, forced displacement and widespread sexual violence, against civilians in South Kordofan and Blue Nile. It has also engaged in "scorched earth" tactics, systematically targeting food sources and deliberately destroying civilian infrastructure, including at least 26 health facilities since 2011. The SPLM-N has also perpetrated war crimes, including indiscriminate attacks on civilian-populated areas, alleged recruitment of children and attacks on UN personnel.

The situation in Darfur also continues to deteriorate, with civilians facing ongoing inter-communal violence, as well as attacks by the SAF and Rapid Support Forces, a pro-government militia with aerial and ground support from the SAF. Heavy clashes between the government and the Sudan People's Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid in Jebel Marra, North Darfur, since mid-January has led to the displacement of over 129,000 civilians. The government continues to prevent humanitarian access from reaching many areas around Jebel Marra. Previous fighting between the SAF and rebel groups contributed to the displacement of more than 233,000 people during 2015. A total of 2.6 million people are now displaced in Darfur.

The government has systematically obstructed the AU-UN hybrid peacekeeping force in Darfur (UNAMID), tasked with a civilian protection mandate, from carrying out human rights monitoring. The UN Secretary-General has condemned repeated attacks on UNAMID, including the recent killing of two peacekeepers, and called upon the government to respect the Status of Forces Agreement.

ANALYSIS

The government has a history of perpetrating atrocities in Darfur and during its civil war with the south. It has consistently defied external pressure to halt mass atrocity crimes. Such crimes are currently being committed in South Kordofan and Blue Nile, where patterns of violence targeting civilians for their perceived support of the SPLM-N have been witnessed for almost five years.

The UNSC and AU have failed to push the government and SPLM-N to honor past agreements on the cessation

of hostilities and delivery of humanitarian assistance. Indiscriminate bombings of rebel-held areas by the SAF demonstrate an unwillingness to distinguish between combatants and civilians, actions that may amount to crimes against humanity. Populations are at heightened risk as a result of ongoing fighting and the lack of humanitarian access.

Despite the presence of UNAMID, civilians have not been afforded adequate protection in Darfur. Ongoing inter-communal violence and SAF operations contribute to the risk of further mass atrocity crimes. Attacks on UN peacekeepers constitute war crimes, while restrictions on their freedom of movement contravenes the Status of Forces Agreement between the UN and the government.

Not only is the government of Sudan manifestly failing to uphold its Responsibility to Protect, it is directly responsible for perpetrating mass atrocity crimes in South Kordofan, Blue Nile and Darfur.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

The UNSC has adopted 61 resolutions on Sudan since 2004, most of which have not been fully implemented. The response of the international community to mass atrocities in South Kordofan and Blue Nile has been grossly inadequate. [See also, [GCR2P's Timeline of International Response to the Situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States](#).]

Members of the current government, including President Omar al-Bashir, the Defence Minister, Abdel Raheem Muhammad Hussein, and the current governor of North Kordofan, Ahmad Haroun, were indicted by the ICC in 2007 for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Darfur. President Bashir was also indicted in 2010 for perpetrating genocide in Darfur. The ICC issued an additional arrest warrant during September 2014 against rebel leader Abdallah Banda for war crimes resulting from an attack on AU peacekeepers during 2007 in northern Darfur. None of the indictees have been surrendered to the Court. On 15 December 2015 the Chief Prosecutor of the ICC criticized the UNSC for failing to meaningfully assist in the arrest of indicted suspects.

On 29 June 2015 the UNSC unanimously adopted Resolution 2228, which extended UNAMID's mandate until 30 June 2016. The resolution emphasized that those responsible for violations of IHL and abuses of human rights "must be held accountable and that the Government of Sudan bears the primary responsibility to protect civilians within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction, including protection from crimes against humanity and war crimes." On 10 February the UNSC extended the mandate of the Panel of Experts until 12 March 2017.

On 3 March the Chairperson of the AU Commission and the UN Secretary-General issued a joint statement expressing deep concern about the escalating violence in Jebel Marra and called upon the Sudanese government to "fully cooperate with UNAMID to facilitate its freedom of movement, as well as that of the

humanitarian actors, in their continued efforts to protect and provide assistance to the civilian population."

On 10 March the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights urged the government to "take action to comply with its responsibility to protect civilians from violence, and to hold accountable those who violate international humanitarian and human rights law."

On 28 March the UN Secretary-General welcomed the government's endorsement of the AUHIP Roadmap and called for rebel groups to sign the agreement. On 8 April Norway, United Kingdom and United States issued a joint statement welcoming the Roadmap and encouraging other Sudanese parties to endorse it. The statement also expressed deep concern about violence in South Kordofan and Blue Nile.

NECESSARY ACTION

After more than 10 years and 61 resolutions it is time for the UNSC and relevant member states to review their entire approach to endemic conflict and ongoing atrocities in Sudan. The UNSC should immediately expand the arms embargo on Darfur to include South Kordofan and Blue Nile.

The government must abide by the AUHIP Roadmap and other parties, including the SPLM-N, should endorse the agreement. The UNSC and AU must ensure the government and SPLM-N facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance, as stipulated in the 2011 Framework Agreement and 2012 cooperation agreements. The UNSC should mandate the establishment of an independent international commission of inquiry for South Kordofan and Blue Nile and actively support efforts to bring ICC indictees to justice.

States with major investments in Sudan, including China, Qatar, Iran and Saudi Arabia, should press the government to fulfill its commitments. The UNSC should ensure that violators of the arms embargo are held to account.

The government and SPLM-N, in accordance with UNSC Resolution 2046, must cease armed hostilities and address the underlying causes of the conflict. The government must stop obstructing UNAMID and allow them to uphold their mandate, including investigating gross human rights violations. Mediation efforts should be facilitated between the government and armed groups operating in Darfur.

MORE INFORMATION

- » [UNISFA Website](#)
- » [UNAMID Website](#)
- » [UNSC Resolution, S/RES/2265](#), 10 February 2016
- » [GCR2P Populations at Risk: Sudan](#)



1 million Rohingyas are subject to systematic persecution and the denial of their ethnic identity

BURMA/MYANMAR

Stateless Rohingya in Burma/Myanmar face systematic persecution that poses an existential threat to their community.

BACKGROUND

Discriminatory state policies and systematic persecution in Burma/Myanmar threaten the existence of the more than 1 million stateless Rohingya, a distinct Muslim ethnic minority group. Despite the historic 8 November democratic elections, Rohingyas were largely disenfranchised in advance of the vote and continue to be denied citizenship and other fundamental human rights. While the opposition National League for Democracy (NLD) won the elections, it did so while excluding all Muslims as candidates. A spokesman for the party said in November that the Rohingya's plight was not an NLD priority.

More than 140,000 people, mostly Rohingyas, remain segregated in IDP camps as a result of previous inter-communal violence. After visiting during February 2016, the Director of Operations for OCHA, John Ging, described the "appalling sanitation conditions" in Rohingya displacement camps and appealed for an end to the "discriminatory and repugnant policies" of segregation and disenfranchisement.

On 29 March the former government lifted the state of emergency in Arakan/Rakhine state – imposed during 2012 inter-communal violence – but the new government has done little to ensure the IDPs' freedom of movement or access to food, water, healthcare and other vital humanitarian assistance. Many Rohingyas in Arakan/Rakhine state also face the ongoing threat of sporadic violence at the hands of Buddhist extremists who reject their right to exist in Burma/Myanmar.

On 31 March 2015 the former government invalidated the identification cards held by many Rohingyas, forcing them to apply for citizenship as "Bengalis," suggesting their illegal migration from Bangladesh. This follows the government denying Rohingyas the ability to self-identify on the national census of March 2014, the first since 1983. On 31 August Burma/

Myanmar's former President, Thein Sein, signed into law the last of four so-called "Protection of Race and Religion" bills. These discriminatory laws place harsh restrictions on women and non-Buddhists, including on fundamental religious freedoms, as well as reproductive and marital rights.

The former UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Myanmar, Tomás Ojea Quintana, has said that the government's failure to address the ongoing human rights situation in Arakan/Rakhine state "will ultimately mean the extermination of the Rohingyas."

The cumulative impact of deteriorating living conditions, combined with ongoing persecution by the government and some Buddhist chauvinist groups, has led tens of thousands of Rohingyas to flee to neighboring countries, where they are often subject to further abuse, human trafficking and refoulement. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported that at least 32,600 people, mostly Rohingyas, fled during 2015.

The country's military forces (Tatmadaw), which have previously perpetrated atrocities against several ethnic minority groups, also pose an ongoing threat. While the previous government signed a ceasefire agreement on 15 October with eight armed ethnic groups, conflict between the Tatmadaw and several other groups continues, including in Kachin and Shan states.

On 28 January Burma/Myanmar's former parliament passed the "Former Presidents' Security Law," which could grant amnesty to former presidents for crimes under international law, including serious human rights violations. Burma/Myanmar's new parliament convened for the first time on 1 February. U Htin Kyaw, a confidant of NLD leader Aung San Suu Kyi, was elected President by parliament and began his term on 1 April. On 6 April parliament created the position of State Counselor for Aung San Suu Kyi.

ANALYSIS

The government's refusal to grant the Rohingya access to citizenship or end discriminatory state policies, encourages ongoing violations of their fundamental human rights and reinforces the dangerous perception of the Rohingya as ethnic outsiders. Government initiatives, including the Protection of Race and Religion bills, appear to be intended to eradicate the Rohingya's legal right to exist as a distinct ethnic group.

The 8 November elections have legitimized a state that denies the Rohingya their most fundamental human rights. As a result of the government curtailing their voting rights and barring many Muslim candidates, Rohingyas have also lost political representation. Disenfranchisement, combined with years of persecution, exclusion and poverty, is causing Rohingyas to flee from Burma/Myanmar, despite the refusal of several countries in the region to offer asylum.

There is an urgent need for the NLD government to protect the human rights of all populations in Burma/Myanmar. The NLD government has a historic opportunity to reverse discriminatory

policies and drastically improve the plight of the Rohingya, but currently appears unwilling to do so.

The country's constitution still exempts the Tatmadaw from prosecution for any act carried out "in the execution of their respective duties." On 25 June the military-dominated parliament defeated a bill that would have abolished the Tatmadaw's veto power over constitutional amendments. With a pervasive culture of impunity, the military has not been held accountable for previous mass atrocity crimes.

The government of Burma/Myanmar is still failing to uphold its primary Responsibility to Protect with regard to the Rohingya.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

Following decades of military dictatorship, democratic reforms have contributed to rapprochement between Burma/Myanmar and the international community, including the lifting of sanctions by a number of countries. [For responses prior to October 2015, see [GCR2P's Timeline of International Response to the Situation of the Rohingya and Anti-Muslim Violence in Burma/Myanmar](#).]

On 4 November the UN Special Advisers on the Prevention of Genocide and the Responsibility to Protect released a statement expressing concern that the electoral process has resulted in "further marginalization of religious minorities," highlighting "decades of institutionalized discrimination in law, policies and practice" against Rohingyas.

On 23 December the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution regarding the Rohingya and "other minorities subject to marginalization and instances of human rights violations and abuses." The resolution called upon Burma/Myanmar to protect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all individuals, including Rohingyas, facilitate the safe and voluntary return of IDPs to their communities and ensure unhindered access to humanitarian assistance.

In her 18 March 2016 report, the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Myanmar, Yanghee Lee, called upon the NLD "to take immediate steps to put an end to the highly discriminatory policies and practices against the Rohingya and other Muslim communities."

On 23 March the UN Human Rights Council adopted a resolution expressing serious concern over human rights violations,

particularly against the Rohingya, and urged the government to repeal discriminatory legislation and lift restrictions on movement.

NECESSARY ACTION

The newly-elected government of Burma/Myanmar must uphold its Responsibility to Protect all populations, regardless of their ethnicity or religion. The NLD government should immediately abolish the Rakhine Action Plan and end institutionalized discrimination against the Rohingya, including the denial of citizenship. It must hold accountable all those who commit human rights abuses, including inciting ethnic and religious intolerance and violence.

In Arakan/Rakhine state the government must facilitate the safe, voluntary return of IDPs to their communities. Neighboring countries should offer protection and assistance to Rohingya asylum seekers.

The international community must urge the new NLD government to develop a comprehensive reconciliation plan, including establishing a commission of inquiry into crimes committed against the Rohingya in Arakan/Rakhine state. The new government must demonstrably improve the welfare of ethnic and religious minorities and repeal laws and discriminatory practices that pose an existential threat to the Rohingya community.

A central component of the new government's reform process must include constitutional reform that addresses the needs of ethnic minorities, as well as the development of an independent judiciary as a means of safeguarding human rights and tackling the culture of impunity regarding past mass atrocity crimes.

MORE INFORMATION

- » [UN General Assembly Resolution, A/RES/70/233](#), 23 December 2015
- » [Report of the Special Rapporteur for human rights in Myanmar](#), 18 March 2016
- » [UN HRC Resolution, A/HRC/31/L.30/Rev.1](#), 23 March 2016
- » [GCR2P Populations at Risk: Burma/Myanmar](#)

IMMINENT RISK

The situation is reaching a critical threshold and the risk of mass atrocity crimes occurring in the immediate future is very high if effective preventive action is not taken.



35,000+ IDPs fled camps in North Kivu during April

550+ civilians killed by the ADF since October 2014

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Populations in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo remain at imminent risk of possible mass atrocity crimes perpetrated by armed groups.

BACKGROUND

Pervasive insecurity in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has allowed armed groups to perpetrate mass atrocity crimes against civilians. Armed groups – such as the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) and various Mayi-Mayi militias – have been operating in the DRC for more than 20 years and continue to sporadically attack vulnerable populations in a region that is home to 1.5 million IDPs.

Despite offensives conducted by the government's armed forces (FARDC) with assistance from the UN's stabilization mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) and its force intervention brigade, violence committed by dozens of armed groups continues throughout the eastern DRC. Populations in Maniema, Katanga and North Kivu have been particularly affected by recent fighting between various Mayi-Mayi groups and the FARDC. Several armed groups have also been implicated in kidnapping humanitarian workers.

The FARDC launched offensive operations against the FDLR in February 2015. Although the FARDC has reportedly liberated many localities previously occupied by the group, the FDLR continues to threaten civilians. Mayi-Mayi militias, particularly the Raia Mutomboki, have also fought with the FDLR. Related inter-communal clashes have also sparked violence between

armed groups affiliated with the FLDR, and those affiliated with ethnic Nandes in Lubero and Walikale, North Kivu.

On 26 January, following a nearly year-long suspension, MONUSCO and the FARDC agreed to resume joint operations against the FDLR. According to OCHA, 35,000 IDPs have been forced to flee camps in North Kivu since 28 March as a result of FARDC clashes with the FDLR and local militias.

Elsewhere in North Kivu the ADF and other armed groups have been sporadically attacking villages near Beni, massacring civilians and perpetrating possible crimes against humanity. The ADF is suspected of killing more than 550 people since October 2014 and has also attacked MONUSCO helicopters and convoys.

The UNSC has raised "deep concerns about the risk of instability, insecurity, the potential for violence, human rights violations and abuses and violations of international humanitarian law" ahead of the presidential elections. President Joseph Kabila's term is constitutionally-mandated to end in 2016, but the government says it lacks the capacity to hold the required elections.

ANALYSIS

While military measures are taken against the FDLR, ADF and other armed groups, civilians remain at risk of reprisal violence. The FARDC and MONUSCO have both failed to respond to early warnings of attacks, particularly around Beni. The FARDC has also been implicated in attacks on civilians, including widespread sexual violence, and often fails to hold its members accountable for human rights violations.

The weakness of government structures undermines attempts to prevent atrocities. This is particularly evident in the eastern DRC, where the government has previously lost control of areas to various rebel groups. While the government has undertaken important reforms, impunity for crimes committed against civilians remains rampant.

Despite the government and MONUSCO encouraging militias to participate in Disarmament, Demobilization, Repatriation, Reintegration and Resettlement (DDRRR) programs prior to launching offensives against them, rebel groups continue to perpetrate abuses against civilians. Competition for control of minerals, as well as underlying conflict between communities that consider themselves indigenous and those perceived as outsiders, has enabled the proliferation of armed groups, which will continue to emerge even after the eradication of the ADF and FDLR if these issues are not resolved.

The government of the DRC has struggled to uphold its Responsibility to Protect and its own forces have been complicit

in some previous mass atrocity crimes. The DRC needs ongoing international support to prevent recurring violence.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

The international community has responded to violence in the eastern DRC by taking measures to confront various armed groups. The UNSC currently subjects 9 entities and 31 individuals in the DRC to sanctions. [For responses prior to March 2016, see GCR2P's [Timeline of International Response to the Situation in the DRC](#).]

On 17 February the UN, AU, EU and International Organization of the Francophonie issued a joint statement encouraging political dialogue ahead of the presidential elections and noting the appointment of Edem Kodjo as AU Special Envoy to aid in the DRC national dialogue.

On 30 March the UNSC extended MONUSCO's mandate to March 2017, emphasizing that the government of the DRC "bears the primary responsibility to protect civilians within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction, including protection from crimes against humanity and war crimes." The following day the UNSC issued a Presidential Statement asserting that the 2013 Peace, Security and Cooperation (PSC) Framework remains essential to achieving lasting peace and security in the Great Lakes Region.

NECESSARY ACTION

The DRC government and MONUSCO must ensure that protecting civilians remains a primary priority as they address the threat posed by armed groups. The FARDC and MONUSCO need to increase their capacity to respond to early warning of inter-communal violence and attacks by armed groups.

MONUSCO should also support the government in facilitating local peacebuilding initiatives and encourage civil society to help facilitate DDRRR. The government, with MONUSCO's support, should enhance security and protection measures, particularly in eastern DRC, in advance of the 2016 elections.

The FARDC must not permit individuals who have previously committed atrocities to join its forces and should train all recruits in the protection of civilians, respect for human rights and IHL. The government should remove all FARDC members accused of serious human rights violations from leadership positions.

Together with the UN Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, the AU, International Conference for the Great Lakes Region and Southern African Development Community should ensure that all signatories to the PSC Framework continue to fulfill their commitments.

MORE INFORMATION

- » [MONUSCO Website](#)
- » [UNSC Resolution, S/RES/2277](#), 30 March 2016
- » [UNSC Presidential Statement, S/PRST/2016/2](#), 31 March 2016
- » [GCR2P Populations at Risk: DRC](#)



2.2 million IDPs

1 out of 5 Boko Haram suicide bombers is a child

NIGERIA

Mass atrocity crimes continue to be perpetrated by the extremist group Boko Haram in northern Nigeria. Excessive use of force by security forces and recurring inter-communal violence also contribute to the threat to civilians.

BACKGROUND

Despite more than a year of joint military operations against Boko Haram, attacks by the extremist group against civilians continue in Nigeria as well as neighboring Cameroon, Chad and Niger. More than 20,000 people have been killed since Boko Haram launched its armed offensive in 2009. According to OCHA, there are currently 2.2 million IDPs in Nigeria and 177,000 Nigerian refugees in neighboring countries. An estimated 7 million people in northeast Nigeria remain food insecure, with 2.5 million in urgent need of assistance.

On 24 December Nigeria's President, Muhammadu Buhari, said that Boko Haram was no longer capable of conducting "conventional attacks" against security forces or major population centers. Despite this claim, multiple attacks have been carried out by Boko Haram in Nigeria during 2016, including raids on villages, IDP camps and mosques, that have resulted in hundreds of deaths.

On 12 April UNICEF reported on the impact of the Boko Haram insurgency on children, who have been killed, recruited to armed groups and exposed to sexual violence. Since April 2014 at least 1.3 million children have been uprooted by Boko Haram violence in Nigeria and neighboring countries. The group has particularly targeted schools for attack, including the 2014 abduction of 276 girls from Chibok and the 2015 abduction of 300 elementary students in Damasak. The vast majority of abducted children remain missing. According to Human Rights Watch, between 2009 and 2015, more than 910 schools were destroyed in northeastern Nigeria, while at least 600 teachers have been killed.

Boko Haram continues to target women and girls for kidnapping, using some abductees to perpetrate attacks. According to UNICEF, one of every five suicide bombers used by Boko Haram in 2015 was a child. On 20 April two females detonated a suicide bomb at an IDP camp in Banki, Borno state, killing eight people.

Nigerian security forces have often failed to provide sufficient protection from Boko Haram. The military has also been accused of committing human rights abuses against civilians, including arbitrary arrests and extrajudicial killings of suspected Boko Haram members. According to Amnesty International, over 7,000 detainees, including children, have died in military detention since 2011.

Nigerian security forces have also been accused of grave abuses while clashing with members of a Shia group, the Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN), in Kaduna state during December. On 11 April, at a public hearing by the Judicial Commission of Inquiry, a Kaduna state official confirmed that soldiers and government officials transported the bodies of 347 people killed in the clashes to a mass grave. On 22 April Amnesty International reported on attempts by the authorities to conceal evidence of the mass killings.

Inter-communal clashes in Nigeria's "middle belt" region, a recurring phenomenon rooted in longstanding grievances over access to land and other resources, also continue. According to Benue state officials, hundreds of people were killed during week-long clashes between Fulani herdsmen and local farmers before security forces halted violence on 27 February. Over 70 people were reportedly killed in raids or clashes in Taraba, Benue and Enugu states during April. On 27 April President Buhari ordered the Chief of Defence Staff and the Inspector-General of Police to "secure all communities under attack by herdsmen."

ANALYSIS

Despite joint military operations driving Boko Haram out of many previously occupied territories, the group continues to target civilians in Nigeria and neighboring countries. While large-scale attacks have become less frequent, the group continues to carry out suicide bombings, demonstrating its resilience and enduring threat.

Displacement and insecurity have increased unemployment and poverty within Nigeria, Africa's largest economy, which is already experiencing a severe decrease in government revenue due to depressed oil prices. Destroyed civilian infrastructure across the northeast and the threat of Boko Haram attacks makes the return of displaced populations dangerous and severely limits humanitarian operations.

The deadly military crackdown on the IMN and alleged human rights abuses by Nigeria's security forces demonstrate the ongoing need for security sector reform. Human rights abuses by the security forces could further destabilize affected communities if not addressed urgently and impartially by the judicial system.

Recurring inter-communal clashes in central Nigeria demonstrate the ongoing need for the government to address the root causes of conflict not only in the northeast, but also in the country's "middle belt" region, especially with regard to conflicts between nomadic herdsmen and settled communities.

The government of Nigeria is struggling to uphold its Responsibility to Protect and needs ongoing support from the international community.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

Despite the escalating crisis, during Nigeria's 2014-2015 term as an elected member of the UNSC, the Council only issued three Presidential Statements on efforts to combat Boko Haram.

In January 2015 the AU Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) authorized deployment of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), comprised of troops from Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria. The mandate of the force includes "the protection of civilians under immediate threat" of attack from Boko Haram. In January 2016 the AUPSC renewed the MNJTF's mandate for 12 months.

During February the United States announced that it will provide training to approximately 750 soldiers from selected units of the Nigerian army and deploy special operations advisers to enhance military capacity to defeat Boko Haram. On 11 April the EU allocated 67 million Euros for the rehabilitation and re-integration of captured Boko Haram members.

On 12 April, two days before the two-year anniversary of the kidnapping of the Chibok girls, a group of UN Special Procedures urged the Nigerian government to escalate efforts to release all persons abducted by Boko Haram.

During her April visit to the region, United States Ambassador Samantha Power visited refugees and IDP camps and announced \$40 million in humanitarian assistance to the Lake Chad countries.

On 14 May representatives from the four states, together with international partners, including the EU, France, United Kingdom and United States, met in Abuja for the second Regional Security Summit on efforts to defeat Boko Haram. Ahead of the Summit, the UNSC issued a Presidential Statement on 13 May, recognizing that some acts perpetrated by Boko Haram "may amount to crimes against humanity and war crimes" and stressing that those responsible must be held accountable.

NECESSARY ACTION

Coordination between the security forces of the four affected countries is crucial to defeating Boko Haram. Governments involved in the MNJTF and ongoing military operations against Boko Haram need to ensure they mitigate the risk to civilians and strictly adhere to IHL and IHRL. Greater steps have to be taken to rescue civilians abducted by Boko Haram. State governments should actively work with local communities to promote re-integration of victims returning from Boko Haram captivity.

In addition to military efforts, root causes of the insurgency must be seriously addressed through social initiatives and political reforms that tackle poor governance, land rights, access to employment and educational opportunities. More resources should be allocated to non-military efforts aimed at countering violent extremism.

The return of refugees and IDPs should be conducted on a strictly voluntary basis. The UN, AU, Economic Community of West African States, and Economic Community of Central African States, as well as individual governments, should urgently assist Nigeria in meeting the humanitarian needs of affected communities and continue to provide technical and military expertise to help combat Boko Haram.

Captured Boko Haram leaders should be held accountable for crimes against humanity committed in areas under the group's

command and control. With international support, the Nigerian government needs to undertake security sector reform to ensure that the army and police are trained to protect civilians and prevent mass atrocities in a manner consistent with international law.

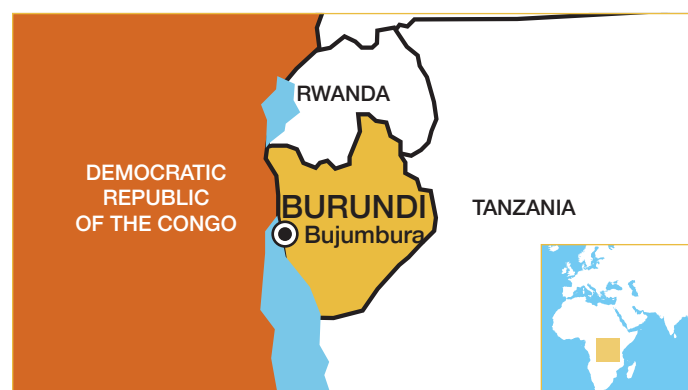
The government should conduct thorough investigations into all abuses, including alleged extrajudicial killings. The government must hold accountable all perpetrators of crimes committed during clashes between the security forces and the IMN.

MORE INFORMATION

- » ["Nigeria: Two years on, abducted Chibok girls are still unaccounted for despite promises of action,"](#) OHCHR, 12 April 2016
- » ["Nigeria: Unearthing the Truth: Unlawful Killings and Mass Cover-Up in Zaria,"](#) Amnesty International, 22 April 2016
- » [GCR2P Populations at Risk: Lake Chad Basin](#)

SERIOUS CONCERN

There is a significant risk of occurrence, or recurrence, of mass atrocity crimes within the foreseeable future if effective action is not taken.



259,000 refugees
since April 2015

500 people killed since
April 2015

BURUNDI

Civilians in Burundi face a serious risk of potential mass atrocity crimes as ongoing political violence threatens to further destabilize the country.

BACKGROUND

There is a serious risk of mass atrocity crimes in Burundi as a result of targeted killings of political and military officials, widespread violations of human rights and ongoing clashes between the security forces and armed opposition elements. The UN Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide and

the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad al-Hussein, have warned of a possible relapse into civil war if violence is not halted.

Since 26 April 2015 at least 500 people have been killed in civil unrest, according to the OHCHR office in Burundi. The crisis developed following the announcement by the ruling Conseil National Pour la Défense de la Démocratie–Forces pour la Défense de la Démocratie (CNDD-FDD) that President Pierre Nkurunziza would seek a third term in the country's elections. President Nkurunziza's candidacy was regarded by the political opposition and many civil society groups as being in violation of the constitution and the 2000 Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement, which brought an end to a civil war that claimed over 350,000 lives between 1993 and 2005.

UN High Commissioner Zeid and the UN Independent Investigation on Burundi (UNIIB) have raised concern over increasing reports of extrajudicial executions, arbitrary arrest, illegal detention and torture during the first three months of 2016, as well as systematic targeting of members of the opposition. Members of the Burundian army and police, as well as of the ruling CNDD-FDD, have also been targeted for assassination. On 25 April General Athanase Kararuzza, a security advisor to the First Vice President, was killed in Bujumbura.

OHCHR has also reported cases of sexual violence by the security forces. Independent media outlets have been systematically destroyed or shut down. There are ongoing

reports of hate speech and incitement to violence by some government officials and some opposition supporters.

UNHCR reported that over 259,000 Burundians have fled the country in the past year, and over 89,000 are internally displaced. Refugees have reported harassment, enforced disappearances and murder, including by the Imbonerakure, the CNDD-FDD's paramilitary youth movement. There have also been allegations of recruitment of refugees into armed groups.

ANALYSIS

The political crisis in Burundi could deteriorate into an armed conflict between forces loyal to the President and those that oppose his third term. Any further deterioration of the security situation would significantly increase the risk of mass atrocity crimes. A protracted conflict in Burundi could have significant repercussions for peace and security throughout the Great Lakes region.

Despite a sustained period of stability since the end of the civil war, recurring political and ethnic conflict have previously caused mass atrocity crimes in Burundi. While the current conflict is primarily political in nature, there is a risk that widening conflict could reignite pre-existing ethnic cleavages.

Tensions between the army, traditionally dominated by the ethnic Tutsi minority, and ethnic Hutu political organizations have previously been a perennial source of conflict. There is a risk that the army, which has been a source of stability since the end of the civil war, could fracture along political and ethnic lines.

The Burundian government must take urgent action to uphold its Responsibility to Protect. The international community must also be prepared to respond in a timely and decisive manner should the situation rapidly deteriorate.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

On 9 November 2015 the UN Secretary-General appointed Jamaal Benomar as his Special Adviser on Burundi. On 12 November the UNSC adopted Resolution 2248 which mandated the deployment of a Support Team to assist the Special Adviser.

On 17 December the UN Human Rights Council held a special session on the situation in Burundi and decided to deploy three experts to the UNIIB.

On 22 January the UNSC visited Burundi and discussed the ongoing crisis with President Nkurunziza. On 25 to 26 February an AU delegation, comprised of five Heads of State, visited Bujumbura. Following this, the AU expanded its deployment of human rights observers and military experts to 200 personnel.

On 2 March the East African Community appointed Benjamin Mkapa as facilitator for political dialogue in Burundi under the principal mediator, President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda.

On 14 March the EU suspended aid to the government of Burundi.

On 1 April the UNSC adopted Resolution 2279, which called on the Secretary-General to report back to the Council with options for the deployment of a UN police contingent to Burundi. On 15 April the Secretary-General presented three options to the UNSC: a 20-50 police assessment presence; 228 individual police to monitor the situation; or deploying up to 3,000 personnel, including Formed Police Units, as part of a UN police protection and monitoring presence.

On 25 April the Chief Prosecutor of the ICC opened a Preliminary Examination into the situation since April 2015.

NECESSARY ACTION

The UNSC should immediately authorize the deployment of a robust UN police protection and monitoring presence, in keeping with the Secretary-General's third option. Monitoring responsibilities should include providing early warning on the risks of mass atrocity crimes. The police component should operate parallel to the UN support team, OHCHR-Burundi and AU human rights monitors and military experts. The UNSC should also mandate the UN to provide targeted logistical support to the AU.

Through Special Advisor Benomar the UN should facilitate an inclusive national political dialogue and monitor human rights through OHCHR-Burundi.

Immediate steps must be taken by the government and opposition to decrease tensions and avoid any further militarization of the political conflict. Allegations of human rights abuses, torture and extrajudicial killings should be subject to thorough and independent investigation and prosecution. The government should honor its commitment to release detainees, allow for the re-opening of independent media, and ensure civil society can operate freely. The AU, UNSC and individual states should impose targeted sanctions on any individuals implicated in targeted killings or deemed responsible for inciting violence or breaching the Arusha Peace Agreement.

MORE INFORMATION

- » [UNSC Resolution, S/RES/2248](#), 12 November 2015
- » [UNSC Resolution, S/RES/2279](#), 1 April 2016
- » [Letter of the UN Secretary-General to the UNSC, S/2016/352](#), 15 April 2016
- » [GCR2P Populations at Risk: Burundi](#)



The 2014 conflict in Gaza led to the death of over 1,500 civilians and the displacement of approximately 500,000 Palestinians

ISRAEL AND THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES

Conflict between Israel and Hamas, and other Palestinian armed groups, poses an ongoing threat to civilians in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT). Recurring armed conflict between Israel and Hamas leaves civilians at risk of war crimes and other grave violations of human rights.

BACKGROUND

Impunity for past violations of international law and the failure to reach a comprehensive peace agreement has contributed to recurring armed conflict between Israel and the Hamas de-facto administration in Gaza, resulting in the commission of war crimes.

Israel and Hamas have fought three wars since 2008, resulting in the death of over 2,800 civilians. The most recent conflict escalated on 7 July 2014 when the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) launched Operation Protective Edge, with the objective of halting sustained indiscriminate rocket fire from Gaza by Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups. The 50-day conflict led to the death of over 1,500 civilians and the displacement of approximately 500,000 Palestinians. IDF bombardment caused considerable damage to homes, schools and medical facilities. Eleven UN Relief and Works Agency staff were also killed.

Since 2014, the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza has been exacerbated by an ongoing air, sea and land blockade by Israel. Illegal Israeli settlements, prohibited under international law, continue to expand in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Over 800 Palestinians have been displaced by Israeli house demolitions in the West Bank so far this year. Security forces have also detained thousands of Palestinians, including children.

Hamas security forces in Gaza have also committed grave human rights abuses, including arbitrary arrests, summary executions, child recruitment and torture of Palestinian civilians.

Hamas claimed responsibility for the bombing of a bus in West Jerusalem on 18 April, which wounded at least 20 Israelis, including 2 children. There has also been an increase in the use of hate speech by political and religious figures from Palestinian and Israeli communities. Renewed armed clashes were reported along the Gaza border on 5 May.

Following Palestine's accession to the Rome Statute on 7 January 2015, the Chief Prosecutor of the ICC announced on 16 January the opening of a preliminary examination into the situation in Palestine in order to establish whether mass atrocity crimes have taken place. On 26 June the Palestinian Authority submitted evidence of alleged Israeli war crimes relating to the 2014 Gaza conflict, Israeli settlements and the treatment of Palestinian prisoners.

Negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians regarding a lasting peace agreement have been suspended since April 2014.

ANALYSIS

In the absence of a meaningful peace process, conflict between Israel and Palestinian armed groups is likely to result in recurring armed hostilities that leave civilians at risk of mass atrocities.

Previous attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure in Gaza and Israel violate IHL and may constitute war crimes. Neither side has held officials accountable for unlawful attacks during the 2014 war that resulted in civilian deaths.

The systematic nature of human rights violations in the OPT may amount to possible crimes against humanity. Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention prohibits an occupying power from transferring parts of its civilian population into occupied territory. Israel's military blockade of Gaza, in force since 2007, is also a potentially illegal form of collective punishment on the area's 1.8 million inhabitants. Illegal Israeli settlements have contributed to the volatile situation in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, where cycles of reprisal violence continue.

Increased anti-Semitic and anti-Arab rhetoric is aggravating tensions between communities across Israel and the OPT.

Despite ongoing political conflict over the sovereignty and future of the OPT, Israel, Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups are obligated to uphold their Responsibility to Protect.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

The UNSC has not adopted a resolution on the Palestinian question since 2009.

On 24 July 2014 the UN Special Advisers on the Prevention of Genocide and the Responsibility to Protect expressed concern at escalating violence in Gaza, warning that both parties were in violation of IHL and IHRL, and these acts "could constitute atrocity crimes."

On 24 June 2015 the Independent, International Commission of Inquiry mandated by the UN Human Rights Council to investigate

the conflict in the Palestinian territories released its report, noting evidence of violations of IHL and IHRL that may amount to war crimes. The Human Rights Council adopted a resolution on 3 July 2015 that condemned all human rights abuses and violations of IHL in the OPT and emphasized the need to ensure that perpetrators of these crimes are held accountable.

In a briefing to the UNSC on 18 April, the UN Secretary-General condemned the construction of newly discovered tunnel crossings from Gaza into Israel and expressed concern about continued punitive home demolitions, which he noted were a form of collective punishment prohibited under international law.

On 6 May the UNSC held an Arria Formula meeting on the protection of the Palestinian civilian population in the OPT.

NECESSARY ACTION

All parties to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict must adhere to IHL and IHRL and work towards a sustainable political solution. Israel should lift the blockade on Gaza and cease illegal settlement-related activity, while the Palestinian Authority must help end indiscriminate attacks on Israeli civilians and rigorously prosecute those who incite or perpetrate these attacks. The Hamas de-facto administration in Gaza must permanently halt indiscriminate rocket attacks on Israel.

It is essential for Israel and the Palestinian Authority to break the culture of impunity and ensure that all those responsible for past violations of IHL and IHRL are held accountable. All parties should condemn anti-Semitic and anti-Arab hate speech and incitement to violence, and cooperate fully with the preliminary examination of the ICC.

States with significant political influence and major trade relations with Israel, such as the United States and EU members, should push for a lasting political solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, strict adherence to IHL and the protection of human rights for all civilians in Israel and the OPT regardless of ethnicity or religion. Major international donors to the Palestinian Authority, and those who support the Hamas de-facto administration in Gaza, should similarly advocate for a complete end to indiscriminate attacks on civilians and anti-Semitic hate speech.

MORE INFORMATION

- » [UN HRC Resolution, A/HRC/29/L.35](#), 3 July 2015
- » [UNSC Press Statement, SC/12052-PAL/2196](#), 17 September 2015
- » [GCR2P Populations at Risk: Israel and the OPT](#)



420,000 IDPs

3,000+ killed since
December 2013460,000
refugees

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Civilians in the Central African Republic remain at risk of mass atrocity crimes committed by "anti-balaka" militias, ex-Séléka rebels and other armed groups.

BACKGROUND

Civilians in the Central African Republic (CAR) remain at ongoing risk of mass atrocity crimes despite the largely peaceful election of a new President, Faustin-Archange Touadéra, on 14 February 2016. Touadéra was inaugurated on 30 March in Bangui and the new government and Prime Minister were announced on 11 April.

The crisis in CAR began after the 24 March 2013 overthrow of President François Bozizé by the predominantly Muslim Séléka rebel alliance. Abuses by the Séléka led to the formation of predominantly Christian and animist "anti-balaka" militias. A UN peacekeeping operation (MINUSCA), French military forces and an EU military assistance mission are presently deployed in the country.

The situation continues to be marked by insecurity. From 30 November 2015 to 15 March 2016 MINUSCA recorded 269 human rights and IHL violations. Attacks against civilians, humanitarian workers and peacekeepers are ongoing in western prefectures. The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), which is active in eastern and southern prefectures, also escalated its sporadic attacks from January to March, including abductions and the killing of civilians. On 17 April a MINUSCA peacekeeper was killed by civilians following a suspected LRA attack near Rafai.

The International Commission of Inquiry (CAR-Col) has found the anti-balaka, ex-Séléka armed groups and their supporters responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity. The CAR-Col estimated that at least 80 percent of CAR's Muslim population had been driven out of the country and concluded that crimes committed by the anti-balaka constitute a "policy of ethnic cleansing" against CAR's Muslims.

There are currently more than 420,000 IDPs in CAR and over 460,000 refugees in neighboring countries. According to the UN, there are also approximately 36,000 Muslim civilians still trapped in seven besieged communities, which have been systematically encircled by the anti-balaka. An estimated 2.3 million people remain in urgent need of humanitarian assistance.

ANALYSIS

The largely peaceful elections and political transition represent important progress, but they have not resolved the underlying conflict in CAR. Armed groups continue to exercise control over large parts of the country, particularly in the remote north and southeast.

National security forces have been implicated in serious violations of human rights and IHL and remain unable to repel attacks by various armed groups without the assistance of international forces. The ongoing fragmentation of the ex-Séléka and anti-balaka is proving challenging for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programs.

Hostilities between anti-balaka militias, ex-Séléka rebels, armed Muslim self-defense groups and other armed groups, as well as between international peacekeepers and these groups, continue to pose a threat to populations. Violence between nomadic pastoralists and settled agriculturalist communities in the transhumance corridor also continues.

MINUSCA continues to face critical capacity gaps that impede its ability to uphold its mandate to protect civilians throughout CAR. Ongoing allegations of sexual abuse by MINUSCA peacekeepers also erode confidence in the UN. The scaling down of French military forces presents additional operational challenges for MINUSCA.

The new CAR government requires sustained international assistance to uphold its Responsibility to Protect.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

Following the deadly surge in violence during late 2013, the international community intensified its response to the crisis in CAR, including passing six UNSC resolutions between October 2013 and April 2015 that emphasized the interim government's responsibility to protect the civilian population.

On 27 January 2016 the UNSC passed Resolution 2262, renewing the sanctions regime and arms embargo, and recalling the primary responsibility of CAR's authorities to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.

On 10 February the head of MINUSCA called for a renewed focus on prosecuting those responsible for serious human rights violations. On 8 April the UN Special Coordinator on sexual exploitation and abuse, Jan Holl Lute, visited CAR to initiate enhanced measures to halt abuse by MINUSCA peacekeepers.

On 18 April the UNSC issued a Press Statement condemning the killing of a MINUSCA peacekeeper and emphasizing that such attacks constitute war crimes. The UNSC reiterated support for MINUSCA in assisting the government to uphold its primary responsibility to protect its population.

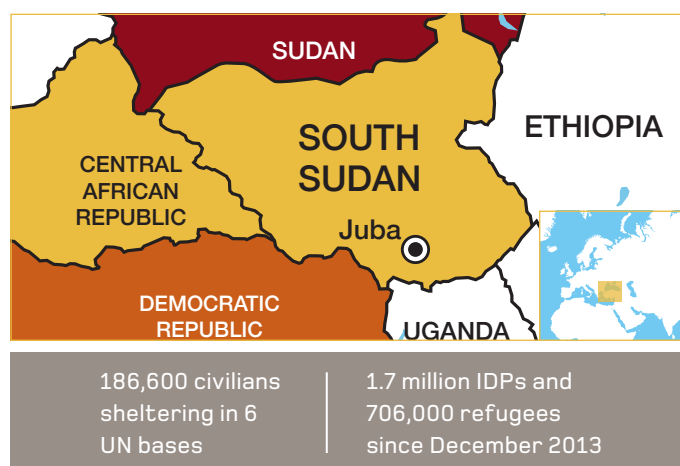
NECESSARY ACTION

The newly-formed government should prioritize accountability for mass atrocity crimes and other violations of IHRL and IHL, including through cooperation with the ICC. Urgent financial and logistical resources are also needed to establish the Special Criminal Court for CAR. The UNSC should sanction individuals responsible for atrocity crimes or other serious abuses of human rights and violations of IHL.

UN and French forces must forcibly disarm groups that continue to threaten populations. MINUSCA must ensure it deploys in adequate numbers to all areas where vulnerable civilians lack sufficient protection, including in areas affected by the LRA in the southeast.

MORE INFORMATION

- » [MINUSCA Website](#)
- » [UNSC Resolution, S/RES/2262](#), 27 January 2016
- » [GCR2P Populations at Risk: Central African Republic](#)



SOUTH SUDAN

Despite the August 2015 peace agreement, civilians in South Sudan remain at serious risk of mass atrocity crimes.

BACKGROUND

Despite an improvement in the security situation in South Sudan since November, both the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and armed rebels have routinely violated a peace agreement signed in August, with heavy fighting reported in Unity, Upper Nile and Western Bahr el Ghazal states. Most recently, on 11 April the SPLA attacked a cantonment site occupied by opposition forces in Numatina, Western Bahr el Ghazal, in direct contravention of the ceasefire.

On 17 February there was an outbreak of inter-communal violence between armed elements from the Shilluk and Dinka communities inside the UN site in Malakal, which was sheltering 48,000 IDPs. There are allegations that some SPLA soldiers entered the camp and fired upon civilians before being repelled by the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). The fighting left more than 25 people dead, including 3 humanitarian workers, and displaced over 26,000. On 11 March the UN established a High-Level Board of Inquiry to investigate UNMISS' response. The UN launched a separate Special Investigation on 26 April.

President Salva Kiir and Riek Machar, leader of the main rebel group, agreed in August to end the country's two-year civil war by signing the "Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan." The power-sharing agreement calls for a permanent ceasefire, as well as the establishment of an independent Hybrid Court for South Sudan (HCSS) to investigate mass atrocities committed during the conflict.

On 24 December President Kiir divided the country's 10 states into 28 new states, complicating the agreed-upon power-sharing formula and aggravating tensions with the former rebels. On 7 January the parties reached an agreement on the division of ministries, but missed a 22 January deadline to establish the Transitional Government of National Unity. On 17 January opposition politicians withdrew from Juba in protest over the re-division of states. Following a number of delays, Machar returned to Juba on 26 April to be sworn in as First Vice President, and the Transitional Government was formed on 29 April.

The civil war was the result of a conflict that started on 15 December 2013 between soldiers from rival SPLA factions. Fighting began after President Kiir accused Machar, the then-former Vice President, of an attempted coup. Over the following 18 months, the worst fighting was between ethnic Dinka and Nuer soldiers loyal to Kiir and Machar, respectively. At least 24 armed militias loosely aligned with either side, including the powerful Nuer White Army, have been operating in South Sudan.

Parties to the civil war engaged in widespread extrajudicial killings, torture, child abductions and sexual violence, and targeted civilians as part of their military tactics. UNICEF estimates that more than 16,000 children were forcibly recruited during the civil war. The AU's Commission of Inquiry reported that between December 2013 and September 2014, widespread mass atrocities were perpetrated. It noted that "indiscriminate killings of civilians" were committed by government and rebel forces in Juba, Bor, Bentiu and Malakal.

OHCHR published a report on 11 March on the human rights situation in South Sudan, noting that all parties to the conflict had committed systematic violations, which may amount to war crimes or crimes against humanity. The report accused the government of pursuing a "scorched earth" policy, deliberately targeting civilians, and highlighted the widespread use of rape as a weapon of war by the SPLA and affiliated militias in Unity state. According to the 22 January report of the Panel of

Experts on South Sudan, the dire humanitarian situation in Unity state "reflects the devastating results of the Government's systematic attack against its own citizens."

At least 50,000 people were killed during the civil war and over 186,600 people are still taking refuge in six UNMISS bases across the country. According to UNHCR, the conflict has resulted in nearly 1.7 million IDPs and 706,000 refugees. Other local conflicts, including fighting in Wau County, Western Bahr el Ghazal, in late March resulted in the displacement of thousands. A cattle raid into Ethiopia by men from the Murle community on 15 April resulted in 208 killed and 108 children kidnapped. Ethiopia has vowed to take punitive military action against Murle militias.

ANALYSIS

Ongoing fighting in parts of South Sudan and the failure to uphold past ceasefires highlights the difficulty in achieving a sustainable peace process. While violence has not reached the same levels as before the August agreement, civilians remain at risk. The defection of several rebel commanders, some of whom have previously perpetrated mass atrocities, increases the threat to vulnerable civilians.

A pervasive culture of impunity has fueled recurring cycles of violence and mass atrocities in South Sudan. Due to the breakdown of fighting along ethnic lines during the civil war, there is an ongoing risk of revenge killings during the transition. With ongoing resource deficits and a hostile operating environment, UNMISS is struggling to protect populations.

The Transitional Government of National Unity requires international assistance to uphold its Responsibility to Protect and ensure accountability for mass atrocity crimes.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

[For responses prior to December 2015, [see GCR2P's Timeline of International Response to the Situation in South Sudan](#).]

On 15 December the UNSC adopted Resolution 2252, which extended UNMISS' mandate until 31 July 2016. The resolution emphasized that the government of South Sudan "bears the primary responsibility to protect its populations from crimes against humanity, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and genocide."

On 18 February the UN Secretary-General condemned the violence in Malakal and called upon all parties to refrain from "stoking ethnic disputes." The following day the UNSC issued a Press Statement, stressing that "attacks against civilians and United Nations premises may constitute war crimes."

Following a meeting with President Kiir in Juba on 25 February, the UN Secretary-General emphasized the importance of fully implementing the peace agreement and urged the government to allow unfettered humanitarian access.

On 17 March 2016 the UNSC adopted a Presidential Statement expressing concern over delays in implementation of the peace

agreement and calling upon the government to "uphold its responsibility for the protection of civilians."

On 22 March the UN Human Rights Council adopted a resolution establishing a commission to investigate human rights abuses in South Sudan.

On 7 April the UNSC adopted Resolution 2280 extending the sanctions regime until 1 June and the mandate of the Panel of Experts until 1 July. Six senior military figures, three from each side, are currently subject to sanctions.

On 4 May the UNSC issued a Press Statement welcoming the formation of the Transitional Government of National Unity and underscoring "the pressing need for accountability for violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law in South Sudan." It also condemned a 25 April attack on the UNMISS compound in Bentiu, noting that such attacks may constitute war crimes.

NECESSARY ACTION

After two years of civil war, the government and rebels must swiftly establish transitional institutions and fully implement all provisions of the peace agreement. The UNSC and Intergovernmental Authority on Development should immediately impose targeted sanctions against any political and military leaders deemed responsible for violating the agreement.

UNMISS must robustly implement its civilian protection mandate. The international community should continue to enhance UNMISS' capabilities through the provision of additional aviation assets, including tactical military helicopters and unarmed unmanned aerial systems. The government must ensure that UNMISS has the ability to move freely to all parts of the country without threats to its personnel and respect the inviolability of UN compounds.

The AU should expeditiously establish the HCSS and ensure it has the resources necessary to investigate and prosecute individuals responsible for mass atrocities committed since December 2013. UNMISS' Human Rights Division must continue to investigate violations of IHL and expeditiously publish its findings. The findings of the high-level board of inquiry should be made public.

The government must hold all perpetrators of atrocities accountable, regardless of affiliation or position, and initiate a comprehensive strategy aimed at strengthening the peace process, particularly the establishment of the Commission for Truth, Healing and Reconciliation.

MORE INFORMATION:

- » [UNMISS Website](#)
- » [UN Secretary-General's Report on South Sudan, S/2015/902](#), 23 November 2015
- » [UNSC Resolution, S/RES/2252](#), 15 December 2015
- » [GCR2P Populations at Risk: South Sudan](#)



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