



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.



SYRIA

Populations in Syria continue to face mass atrocity crimes committed by state security forces and affiliated militias. Some armed opposition groups are also committing war crimes. The increasing presence of foreign fighters militarily contributing to the conflict puts civilians at even greater risk.

BACKGROUND

After almost three years of conflict in Syria at least 130,000 people have been killed. According to the UN, as of 13 January there were over 2.37 million Syrian refugees in neighboring countries, with over 5 million people internally displaced. Ongoing fighting has left at least 9.3 million Syrians in need of humanitarian assistance, 2.5 million of whom remain in inaccessible areas.

The Syrian government continues its aerial bombardment of opposition strongholds and residential areas. At least 517 people were killed, including 151 children, between 15 and 29 December 2013 in government "barrel bomb" attacks on Aleppo. Recent government ground offensives against opposition-held areas also threaten civilians trapped by intense fighting.

A UN investigation team confirmed that on 21 August a large-scale attack of sarin gas, delivered by rockets, hit several areas of Ghouta, Damascus, killing an estimated 1,400 people. A joint UN-Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons team began the process of dismantling Syria's chemical weapons on 6 October; however the ongoing civil war is hampering efforts to remove and destroy the weapons according to the agreed timeline.

On 2 December the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, said the Human Rights Council-mandated Commission of Inquiry (CoI) had evidence of "responsibility

at the highest level of government" in Syria for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Government-allied militias have committed large-scale massacres in several towns over the last two years and have perpetrated war crimes and gross violations of international humanitarian law (IHL) as a matter of state policy. The CoI reported on 11 September that pro-government forces "have continued to conduct widespread attacks on the civilian population, committing murder, torture, rape and enforced disappearances as crimes against humanity."

Some armed opposition groups have also committed war crimes, including torture and extrajudicial killing. In a conflict that the CoI has described as "overtly sectarian in nature," some armed groups continue to target religious minorities for violent reprisals.

Syria's political opposition formed the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces (National Coalition) during November 2012, which is widely recognized outside Syria as the legitimate representative of the Syrian people. However, it has not gained widespread support inside the country. On 25 September eleven Syrian armed groups repudiated the National Coalition. On 22 November seven rebel groups merged into the Islamic Front with the goal of "toppling the regime." The rising salafist presence amongst the armed opposition has caused friction between groups competing for support and resources, with widespread fighting between extremists and more moderate rebel militias in Aleppo and Idlib. From 3 to 11 January over 700 people, at least 100 of whom were civilians, were killed in fighting between several rebel groups and the al-Qaeda-affiliated "Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant" (ISIL).

International actors continue to vie for influence in shaping the outcome of the conflict, which UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has described as a "proxy war, with regional and international players arming one side or the other." Saudi Arabia and Qatar are providing arms to some rebel groups. Meanwhile, Russia and Iran have criticized international efforts to undermine President Bashar al-Assad's government and continue to provide it with critical economic, military and political support.

The conflict poses a growing threat to peace and stability throughout the Middle East. Sectarian violence in Iraq has been exacerbated by the Syrian civil war, while friction between Syria and Turkey also remains high following a number of deadly cross-border incidents.

The conflict has had a particularly severe impact upon Lebanon, which hosts over 868,000 Syrian refugees. Sporadic clashes continue to occur between Lebanese supporters and opponents of the Assad government. On 2 January a car bomb struck a Hezbollah stronghold of Beirut, killing at least five people, less than a week after another car bomb killed eight, including former Finance Minister Mohamad Chatah. Hezbollah has directly engaged in fighting with Syrian rebels on both sides of the Syria-Lebanon border.

A peace conference ("Geneva II") aimed at ending the violence and establishing a transitional governing body in Syria was scheduled to take place in June 2013 but has been postponed until 22 January 2014. On 6 January the UN Secretary-General sent invitations to Syrian and international participants. The National Coalition has not yet agreed to participate in Geneva II and one of its key affiliates, the Syrian National Council, has announced it will boycott the conference. As of 14 January, Iran, President Assad's key regional ally, has not been formally invited.

ANALYSIS

The government continues to utilize its military resources to retain power at all costs. The 21 August chemical weapons attack came after more than two years of the Syrian government perpetrating ongoing crimes against humanity and war crimes. The majority of deaths continue to be caused by conventional weapons used illegally against innocent civilians.

Hezbollah's direct involvement in the conflict has bolstered the Assad government, but alarm over the shift in the balance of power on the battlefield has influenced several governments to provide military assistance to some rebel groups. With each side in Syria still committed to an outright military victory, the conflict imperils the lives of countless civilians who continue to be directly threatened by the ongoing civil war.

The fracturing of the Syrian opposition has compounded the difficulty of convening the Geneva II peace talks. ISIL and several other extremist armed groups pose a direct threat to Syrian civilians, especially those from minority communities.

External political influence upon the Syrian government via the UN and regional actors remains weak. Sanctions have had limited success as Syria's few remaining allies continue to provide crucial economic insulation. Despite the UNSC's timely response to the government's use of chemical weapons, ongoing UNSC divisions over Syria have allowed the situation to deteriorate to the point where few options for a peaceful political solution exist. Despite this, it is imperative that diplomatic efforts continue.

The government of Syria has not only failed to uphold its Responsibility to Protect, it bears primary responsibility for the ongoing commission of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

Following the outbreak of violence in March 2011, the international community responded by censuring the regime for its widespread violations of human rights. [For responses prior to September 2013, see [GCR2P's Timeline of International Response to the Situation in Syria](#).]

Between October 2011 and July 2012 Russia and China vetoed three UNSC resolutions aimed at holding the Syrian government accountable for mass atrocity crimes. On 27 September 2013 the UNSC unanimously adopted Resolution 2118, enabling the expeditious destruction of Syria's chemical weapons stockpile. On 2 October the UNSC issued a Presidential Statement calling upon the Syrian authorities to facilitate cross-border humanitarian access, urging all parties to the conflict to protect civilians and stressing the need to end impunity for violations of IHL and grave human rights abuses. This has not been implemented.

On 19 November the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution condemning ongoing violence in Syria, including the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian government. The resolution called upon the UNSC to take measures to end all serious violations of IHL in Syria.

The UN Human Rights Council has adopted eleven resolutions condemning atrocities in Syria.

NECESSARY ACTION

Syrian government forces and armed opposition groups must halt the commission of mass atrocity crimes and adhere to IHL. Both sides must facilitate immediate and unimpeded humanitarian access to civilian populations trapped or displaced by fighting.

The UNSC needs to take proximate steps to end atrocities in Syria, including imposing an arms embargo and referring the situation to the ICC. Those deemed responsible for mass atrocity crimes in Syria should be thoroughly investigated and the perpetrators, regardless of affiliation, brought to justice. Donor countries should allocate funds for additional UN-sanctioned human rights monitors on the Syrian border in order to collect evidence for prosecutions.

Russia, Iran and Hezbollah must cease arming and enabling the crimes of the Syrian government. Countries opposed to the rule of President Assad should deny support to armed groups who commit war crimes or target Alawites and other minorities for reprisals.

The international community must intensify efforts to work towards a political solution to the conflict. This includes ensuring that all parties to the conflict and all states with a stake in the outcome attend Geneva II.

MORE INFORMATION

- » [Report of the independent international commission of inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic A/HRC/24/46](#), 11 September 2013
- » [UNSC Presidential Statement S/PRST/2013/15](#), 2 October 2013
- » [UN General Assembly resolution on the "Situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic," A/C.3/68/L.42/Rev.1](#), 19 November 2013
- » [GCR2P Populations at Risk: Syria](#)



CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Mass atrocity crimes are being committed in the Central African Republic by ex-Séléka rebels, "anti-balaka" militias and other armed groups.

BACKGROUND

The situation in the Central African Republic (CAR) has rapidly deteriorated since 5 December after an attack in Bangui by "anti-balaka" (anti-machete) militias and loyalists of ousted President François Bozizé. The attack against former Séléka rebels sparked widespread violence throughout the capital as well as in Ouham province in the northwest. The violence marked a significant escalation of the conflict in CAR, which had already seen increased attacks by armed groups against both Muslim and Christian communities since October.

Civilians have suffered pervasive insecurity since December 2012, when the Séléka alliance launched an armed rebellion against the government. Despite several agreements brokered by the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Séléka alliance overthrew President Bozizé on 24 March 2013. Séléka leader Michel Djotodia proclaimed himself president of CAR and on 13 April established a National Transitional Council (NTC). Since the coup, and despite ordering their dissolution on 13

September, the NTC has been unable to bring Séléka fighters under control. On 10 January, following intense international pressure, Djotodia resigned as interim president.

Since December 2012 Séléka forces, who are predominantly Muslim, have committed grave human rights abuses against civilians throughout the country and have especially targeted the majority Christian population. In response, Christian civilians formed anti-balaka militias, which have conducted vicious reprisals against Muslims. Extrajudicial killings of Muslim and Christian civilians have been carried out, including "door to door" searches by rival militias and mobs seeking potential victims.

With UNSC authorization, during December 2013 France increased its troop deployment to CAR from 400 to 1600. Troops have been deployed in Bangui, Bossangoa, Bozoum and Paoua to halt attacks against civilians and restore security. French soldiers and armed groups clashed on 9 December as disarmament efforts began in Bangui, resulting in the death of two French soldiers.

Anti-balaka forces launched another attack against Muslim neighborhoods of Bangui on 20 December, spurring a cycle of renewed violence that led to at least 71 deaths by 24 December. A mass grave of at least 30 people who were reportedly executed and exhibited signs of torture was discovered on 25 December. OCHA estimates a further 40 civilians were killed on 25 December as violence continued between anti-balaka and ex-Séléka forces. Eight African Union (AU) peacekeepers were also killed between 25 and 26 December.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) estimates that between 5 December and 7 January at least 778 people, mainly civilians, have been killed in Bangui. The UN estimates that 513,000 people have been displaced in Bangui since 5 December, with as many as 100,000 seeking shelter at the Bangui M'Poko airport.

Violence also broke out in Bossangoa on 5 December as anti-balaka militias reportedly attempted to re-take the town from ex-Séléka elements, leaving at least 38 civilians killed. Twenty-seven Muslim civilians were killed by anti-balaka militias in Bohong on 12 December. In Bozoum at least 70 people have been killed and over 3000 displaced since 23 December. Serious attacks against civilians have also been perpetrated in Bocarango, Berberati and Paoua, but death tolls and displacement figures remain unconfirmed.

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that over 86,400 people have sought refuge in neighboring countries and more than 958,000 people have been internally displaced since December 2012. The UN Children's Emergency Fund reported on 30 December that attacks against children "have sunk to a vicious new low," with

reports of beheadings and mutilations. At least 6,000 children have been forcibly recruited as soldiers.

According to the International Committee of the Red Cross, violence in Bangui following Djotodia's resignation resulted in at least 125 civilians killed between 10 and 13 January.

ANALYSIS

CAR has suffered decades of political instability and humanitarian crisis. Since March 2013 the state has effectively ceased to function. The NTC is unable to exercise sovereignty over CAR and cannot prevent various armed groups from perpetrating attacks. Impunity for grave human rights violations is pervasive as the NTC has lacked the capacity and political will to investigate abuses, including those of former Séléka elements.

Recent violence in Bangui has highlighted the risks to civilians from fighting between ex-Séléka rebels, anti-balaka militias and other armed groups, including former soldiers loyal to ex-President Bozizé. The 5 December attack on Bangui indicates that there is growing coordination between some anti-balaka elements and armed Bozizé loyalists, and that their numbers and capacities are increasing. The risk of a wider civil war is a distinct possibility and threatens further disastrous consequences for civilians.

The presence of foreign armed elements exacerbates the crisis and also puts civilians at heightened risk of mass atrocity crimes. Fighters from Chad and Sudan comprise a significant portion of ex-Séléka forces. The Lord's Resistance Army is also active in the east and has perpetrated recent attacks against civilians.

Serious concerns have been expressed regarding the ability of the under-resourced AU force (MISCA) to adequately protect civilians and restore security. The arrival of French troops has helped to improve the situation, but a more robust presence is necessary to stabilize the country.

The NTC has been manifestly unwilling and unable to uphold its Responsibility to Protect.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

The international community has intensified its response to the crisis in CAR following the deadly surge of violence during late 2013. [For responses prior to November 2013, see [GCR2P's Timeline of the International Response to the Situation in the Central African Republic](#).]

During a UNSC briefing on 25 November, UN Deputy-Secretary-General Jan Eliasson said that the world faced "a profoundly important test of international solidarity and of our responsibility to protect" in CAR.

The UNSC passed Resolution 2127 on 5 December, emphasizing that the NTC has the primary responsibility

to protect the civilian population in CAR. The resolution granted a Chapter VII mandate to AU and French forces to protect civilians and restore security, imposed an arms embargo and established a UN Commission of Inquiry.

On 7 December it was announced that MISCA would be increased from 3,600 to 6,000 troops as a result of the rapidly deteriorating situation. The AU assumed command from ECCAS on 19 December and nearly 4,000 troops are presently deployed. A number of donors, including the European Union and the United States, have pledged support to the French and AU mission.

On 9 December the Chief Prosecutor for the ICC, Fatou Bensouda, called upon former Séléka elements and other armed groups, including the anti-balaka, "to stop attacking civilians and committing crimes" or risk prosecution.

A high-level UN delegation, including the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Adama Dieng, traveled to CAR between 17 and 21 December to assess the situation.

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, stated on 20 December that UN monitors had documented widespread human rights violations in recent months and called for greater international efforts to avert catastrophe in CAR.

On 26 December UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and French President François Hollande agreed to undertake consultations with the UNSC and AU regarding planning to expeditiously transition MISCA to a UN-led peacekeeping operation of approximately 6,000 to 9,000 troops.

NECESSARY ACTION

The NTC must publicly condemn all attacks on civilians, actively attempt to disarm armed groups, including ex-Séléka fighters, and fully cooperate with the French and AU mission.

French and AU forces must disarm all armed groups who threaten civilians. Urgent protection is needed for vulnerable civilians in Bangui, Bossangoa and other areas, particularly in the northwest. French and AU forces must ensure encampments of internally displaced persons (IDPs) are adequately protected.

Additional troops, including the full MISCA force of 6,000, must be deployed to CAR as rapidly as possible to undertake civilian protection operations. Donors should urgently provide financial and logistical support to the AU to ensure MISCA has the necessary resources to fulfill its mandate.

Additional support must be provided to the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in CAR to ensure it has adequate protection and necessary resources to fulfill its mandate,

including human rights monitoring and assisting with a political transition.

The ICC should immediately open a new investigation into the situation in CAR.

MORE INFORMATION

- » [BINUCA Website](#)
- » [UNSC Resolution S/Res/2121](#), 10 October 2013
- » [UNSC Resolution S/Res/2127](#), 5 December 2013
- » [GCR2P Populations at Risk: Central African Republic](#)



SUDAN

Populations in South Kordofan and Blue Nile continue to face mass atrocity crimes perpetrated by the Sudanese Armed Forces and affiliated armed groups. Populations are also at risk in Darfur.

BACKGROUND

Since June 2011 the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) have conducted a counterinsurgency campaign in South Kordofan against the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N), a rebel group that fought alongside forces associated with the government of South Sudan during the 1983–2005 civil war. These forces have also been fighting in neighboring Blue Nile since the conflict expanded during September 2011.

The SAF has conducted indiscriminate aerial bombardments of populated areas in South Kordofan and Blue Nile, including with cluster munitions. The SAF and their allied paramilitaries, the Popular Defense Forces (PDF), have committed war crimes, including extra-judicial killing, forced displacement and sexual violence against civilians. Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have documented the SAF's widespread use of scorched earth tactics, including the systematic targeting of food sources and deliberate destruction of civilian structures.

The SPLM-N has also perpetrated war crimes. On 14 December the group shelled civilian areas of Kadugli, South Kordofan, in direct violation of IHL.

Heavy fighting has been reported since mid-November in South Kordofan between the SAF and the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF), an umbrella organization consisting of the SPLM-N and other armed rebel groups. The Sudan Satellite Project has used satellite imagery to confirm large-scale aerial bombardment of civilian areas by the SAF in Buram and Dilling counties, South Kordofan. Clashes between the SRF and the SAF were also reported in Jebel Abu Domou on 1 December. The SAF issued a statement on 21 December claiming to have recaptured 17 areas previously controlled by the SRF.

The ongoing conflict has led to the internal displacement of over 1 million civilians while more than 230,000 civilians have fled to South Sudan and Ethiopia. The government continues to block UN agencies, international humanitarian organizations, monitors and independent media from access to rebel-held areas in South Kordofan and Blue Nile. Sudan has consistently failed to honor AU-brokered agreements and UNSC resolutions calling for a cessation of hostilities.

The security situation in Darfur also remains volatile as a result of inter-communal and state-sponsored violence, which displaced over 300,000 people during 2013. The government has been restricting the movement of the UN peacekeeping force in Darfur (UNAMID), limiting its ability to uphold its civilian protection mandate. Four UNAMID peacekeepers were killed on 11 and 13 October in North Darfur while two peacekeepers were also killed on 30 December in South Darfur.

ANALYSIS

The government of Sudan 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 more than two years.

Indiscriminate bombings of rebel-held areas demonstrate an unwillingness to distinguish between combatants and civilians, actions which violate IHL and may amount to crimes against humanity. Both the government and the SPLM-N have continued attacks against civilian areas despite negotiations.

The UNSC and AU have failed to push the government of Sudan and the SPLM-N to uphold agreements to cease hostilities and allow the delivery of humanitarian aid to South Kordofan and Blue Nile.

The failure to resolve the final status of Abyei also continues to endanger the lives of civilians living there. Heightened tensions between the Ngok Dinka and Misseriya communities during the migration season have increased the risk of a recurrence of significant inter-communal violence.

Despite the presence of UNAMID, the security situation in Darfur continues to deteriorate. Recent inter-communal violence and the expanded operations of Darfuri rebel groups into North Kordofan and Abyei contributes to the risk of further mass atrocity crimes.

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

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

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 for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Darfur. President Bashir was also indicted in 2010 for perpetrating genocide in Darfur. [For responses prior to September 2013, see [GCR2P's Timeline of International Response to the Situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States](#).]

Acting on behalf of the AU High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) for Sudan former South African President Thabo Mbeki has facilitated regular talks between the government of Sudan and the SPLM-N. Following a 23 September meeting, the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) extended the AUHIP's mandate until December 2014.

The UNSC issued a Press Statement on 11 October, calling upon the SAF and the SPLM-N to allow safe passage for humanitarian organizations conducting a polio vaccination campaign.

NECESSARY ACTION

The government of Sudan and SPLM-N must cease hostilities and address the underlying causes of the conflict. The UNSC should expand the arms embargo on Darfur to include South Kordofan and Blue Nile.

The UNSC and AU must ensure that the 2011 Framework Agreement and 2012 cooperation agreements are rigorously implemented. States with major investments in Sudan, including China, Qatar and Saudi Arabia, should press the government to fulfill its commitments.

Crimes against humanity and war crimes perpetrated in South Kordofan, Blue Nile and Darfur must be thoroughly investigated. The UNSC should mandate the establishment of an independent international commission of inquiry for South Kordofan and Blue Nile.

Sudan and South Sudan must continue to negotiate outstanding post-secession issues and resolve the status of Abyei. Both governments should end support for armed groups operating in the other's territory. During the volatile migration season the UN peacekeeping mission in Abyei (UNISFA) should continue to implement its conflict prevention and mediation strategy and increase the number of temporary operating bases in the region.

MORE INFORMATION

- » [UNISFA Website](#)
- » [UNAMID Website](#)
- » [UNSC Press Statement SC/11145](#), 11 October 2013
- » [GCR2P Populations at Risk: Sudan](#)



SOUTH SUDAN

Political divisions within South Sudan have resulted in heavy fighting and mass atrocities committed by rival pro and anti-government forces, plunging the country into civil war. Ethnic mobilization threatens wider inter-communal violence, heightening the risk of further mass atrocities, particularly in Jonglei state.

BACKGROUND

Violent clashes between Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) soldiers from rival political and ethnic groups has left several thousand people dead and displaced over 400,000 civilians since 15 December. The heavy fighting began in Juba after President Salva Kiir accused Riek Machar, the former Vice-President who was removed from office in July 2013, of an attempted coup.

The fighting has largely been between ethnic Dinka and Nuer SPLA soldiers, politically aligned to the President and former Vice-President, respectively. Both sides have been accused of targeting civilians based upon their ethnicity. On 31 December the UN Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) stated that, "extra-judicial killings of civilians and captured soldiers have occurred in various parts of the country, as evidenced by the discovery of large numbers of

bodies in Juba, as well as the Upper Nile and Jonglei state capitals of Malakal and Bor.”

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, stated that UN human rights officers had reported the existence of a mass grave in Bentiu, Unity state, containing the bodies of at least 34 SPLA soldiers believed to be of Dinka ethnicity. Two other mass graves were allegedly discovered in Jebel-Kujar and Newside in Juba. UNMISS is currently investigating these reports.

A division of the SPLA, commanded by General Peter Gadet, defected on 18 December and captured Bor. The government has deployed thousands of soldiers to retake the town, but has not yet succeeded in doing so. Heavy fighting has also taken place in oil-rich Unity state where Machar’s forces occupied Bentiu before being displaced by government forces on 10 January.

As a result of the fighting and ethnic targeting, approximately 65,000 people have sought refuge in UNMISS bases across the country. In order to support UNMISS’ efforts to implement its protection of civilians mandate, the UNSC adopted Resolution 2132 on 24 December, temporarily enlarging UNMISS by an additional 5,500 troops and 440 police.

The presidents of Kenya and Ethiopia visited Juba on 24 December, ahead of an Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) summit on 27 December, to discuss the crisis in South Sudan. Following the visit, President Kiir expressed his willingness to engage in negotiations while also declaring that he will hold accountable anyone involved in committing atrocities. Delegations from both sides met with IGAD mediators in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 3 January with direct negotiations starting two days later.

The ethnic dimension to the conflict has fueled inter-communal violence elsewhere in the country. On 18 December an estimated 2000 Lou Nuer youth attacked Dinka civilians sheltering at an UNMISS base in Akobo, Jonglei state, resulting in the death of 11 civilians and two UN peacekeepers. In late December, over 25,000 Lou Nuer fighters, known as the “White Army,” marched towards Bor, Jonglei state, although most disbanded following mediation efforts. However, on 30 December approximately 5,000 White Army members joined Machar’s forces fighting government troops outside Bor.

ANALYSIS

The high number of casualties and large-scale displacement since 15 December illustrates the severity of the crisis confronting South Sudan. The rapid descent into civil war highlights the fragility of South Sudan’s government as well as the SPLA’s deep political and ethnic divisions. Both pro and anti-government forces from the SPLA have been directly implicated in atrocities.

The ethnic dimension to the conflict dramatically heightens the risk to civilians. Civilians in Bor have been subjected to atrocities in the past, including a 1991 massacre of Dinka by Nuer fighters loyal to Machar. The absence of accountability for individuals implicated in previous atrocities perpetuates recurring ethnic mobilization and targeted violence. The attack on the UN compound in Akobo demonstrates a complete disregard for IHL by ethnic Nuer militias associated with Machar’s rebellion.

The government of South Sudan and UNMISS require immediate international assistance to ensure security throughout the country and uphold their Responsibility to Protect.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

UNMISS has approximately 7,000 troops in South Sudan with a civilian protection mandate. UNSC Resolution 2109, which extended UNMISS’ mandate until July 2014, called upon the government of South Sudan to “take greater responsibility for the protection of its civilians.”

On 16 December the AU and the European Union issued statements that called upon all parties to protect civilians and adhere to IHL.

On 30 December the AU issued a Communiqué, which condemned the ethnic targeting of civilians and called for the establishment of a commission to investigate human rights violations and other abuses.

The UNSC issued Press Statements on 17 December and 10 January, calling upon the government of South Sudan to protect all civilians, regardless of ethnicity, and to engage in peaceful dialogue.

High Commissioner Pillay issued a statement on 19 December, expressing concern over reports of extrajudicial killings and called upon the government to hold perpetrators accountable.

Following the UNSC’s authorization of increased UNMISS troop levels, on 24 December the UN Special Advisers on the Prevention of Genocide and the Responsibility to Protect issued a statement in which they recalled that “targeted attacks against civilians and against UN personnel, such as those that have occurred in Juba and Jonglei state, could constitute war crimes or crimes against humanity.”

The UN Secretary-General issued a media message to the people of South Sudan on 25 December, stressing that all parties had a responsibility to protect civilians and warning that they will be held accountable for their failure to do so.

NECESSARY ACTION

All parties to the current conflict must uphold their Responsibility to Protect. President Kiir and Machar

should engage with the IGAD negotiations and end hostilities. The UNSC, AU and major international supporters of South Sudan, including the United States, should assist in these mediation efforts.

UNMISS must assume a more robust role in order to uphold its protective mandate. The international community should enhance UNMISS' protective capabilities through the rapid provision of additional troops and resources, including level-two field hospitals and additional aviation assets. The supply of tactical and utility helicopters will assist surveillance efforts aimed at detecting and deterring potential attacks upon vulnerable communities. The government of South Sudan must ensure that UNMISS has the ability to move freely to all parts of the country.

The government must break the culture of impunity and hold all perpetrators of mass atrocities accountable, regardless of their affiliation, position or ethnicity. The UNMISS Human Rights Division must investigate reports of extra-judicial killings, arbitrary detentions and mass graves. In addition

to government efforts, the UNSC should mandate the establishment of an independent commission of inquiry into crimes perpetrated since 15 December. The international community should strengthen UNMISS' investigative capacity by providing enhanced forensic capabilities.

The government of South Sudan must initiate a comprehensive strategy aimed at ethnic and political reconciliation between the country's rival forces. This must include justice for victims of past conflicts, including those targeted during inter-communal violence in Jonglei state and elsewhere.

MORE INFORMATION:

- » [UNMISS Website](#)
- » [UNSC Press Statement SC/11221](#), 17 December 2013
- » [UNSC Resolution S/RES/2132](#), 24 December 2013
- » [AU PSC Communiqué, PSC/AHG/COMM.1\(CDXI\)](#), 30 December 2013
- » [GCR2P Populations at Risk: South Sudan](#)

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.



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Populations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo remain at imminent risk of crimes against humanity and war crimes perpetrated by armed groups and military forces.

BACKGROUND

During 2012 and 2013 insecurity in the eastern regions of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) caused by

fighting between the Armed Forces of the DRC (FARDC) and a group of army defectors known as the March 23 (M23) rebel movement allowed various armed groups to perpetrate mass atrocity crimes against the civilian population. More than 967,000 civilians have fled their homes since the mutiny started during April 2012, contributing to the more than 2.7 million IDPs in the DRC. Although M23 surrendered on 5 November 2013, the civilian population still faces grave risks from other armed groups.

Peace negotiations between M23 and the DRC government, led by the International Conference for the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), began on 8 December 2012 and formal declarations were signed by both sides on 12 December 2013. The declarations address the official end of the M23 rebellion and demobilization of combatants, as well as government commitments to reconciliation and institutional reform.

Over the past two years many of the approximately 30 other armed groups operating in the eastern DRC increased their activities in the security vacuum created by redeployment of FARDC troops to confront M23. Some of these groups – namely the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) and various local Mayi-Mayi militias – have

been operating within the DRC for more than a decade, but utilized insecurity in the east to attack populations with increasing frequency. Patterns of violence committed by these groups, including killing, abduction and forced recruitment of civilians, have been witnessed in North Kivu, South Kivu, Katanga and Oriental Province over the past year. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported a significant increase in sexual violence in North Kivu, noting over 705 registered cases in the first six months of 2013 alone.

The FARDC has also been implicated in attacks upon civilians, including 135 documented cases of rape committed in Minova as M23's forces occupied Goma during November 2012. OCHA has received allegations of FARDC troops threatening civilians on the basis of their ethnicity and perpetrating crimes against populations in reprisal for alleged collaboration with Mayi-Mayi groups. On 20 November 2013 a military court began the trial of 41 FARDC soldiers for war crimes, including rape.

The FARDC reclaimed rebel strongholds in North Kivu from M23 forces with the direct military assistance of a UNSC-authorized intervention brigade as part of the UN stabilization mission in the DRC's (MONUSCO) enhanced mandate. Although initially focused on M23, the intervention brigade is mandated to combat all rebel groups operating in the DRC. On 9 December the brigade initiated offensive operations in North Kivu against the FDLR.

Between 14 and 25 December the Allied Democratic Forces-Nalu, an alliance of Ugandan rebel groups who also operate in the DRC, attacked civilians in Beni and Kamango in North Kivu. The attacks reportedly resulted in the death of more than 60 civilians and displacement of 150,000. The FARDC and MONUSCO's intervention brigade retook Kamango on 25 December.

ANALYSIS

Despite ongoing military offensives and M23's defeat, the threat posed by armed groups remains high. The weakness of government structures undermines attempts to prevent atrocities and protect civilians. This is particularly evident in the eastern DRC where the government has previously lost control of areas to various rebel groups and has historically been incapable of controlling its borders. Rising threats from other armed groups and widespread displacement poses an ongoing challenge to the FARDC and MONUSCO. Refugee flows into northern DRC from deteriorating conflicts in CAR and South Sudan may increase insecurity in an already volatile region.

Competition for control of minerals as well as underlying conflict between communities that consider themselves "indigenous" and those with alleged Rwandan ancestry

contributes to the pervasiveness of armed violence. Without adequately addressing the root causes of conflict in the eastern DRC, armed groups will continue to emerge and threaten populations residing there.

FARDC troops have routinely committed crimes against populations they have been deployed to protect. The FARDC also continues to incorporate local militias into its ranks, a practice that exacerbates divisions within the military and potentially puts civilians at risk.

The government of the DRC has struggled to uphold its Responsibility to Protect and its own forces have at times been complicit in mass atrocity crimes. Following the military defeat of M23 the DRC needs ongoing support in order to halt atrocities committed by other armed groups, especially the FDLR.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

The international community has responded to the violence in the eastern DRC by taking diplomatic, political and military measures to confront the operations of armed groups. [For responses prior to November 2013, see [GCR2P's Timeline of International Response to the Situation in the DRC.](#)]

MONUSCO is responsible for more than 19,000 UN personnel operating under a civilian protection mandate. Since 2002 the UN has facilitated a reduction in membership of various armed groups through its Disarmament, Demobilization, Repatriation, Reintegration and Resettlement program.

The UNSC currently subjects 9 entities and 31 individuals, including several M23 and FDLR leaders, to the enforcement of travel bans and asset freezes.

On 14 November the UNSC issued a Presidential Statement welcoming the end of the M23 rebellion and stressing the need to neutralize all armed groups operating in the DRC, particularly the FDLR.

The Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Hervé Ladsous, visited North Kivu on 3 December to participate in the launch of the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations' first unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV). UAVs will be used by MONUSCO to protect civilians through aerial surveillance of various armed groups.

On 12 December the ICGLR and Southern African Development Community (SADC) issued a Joint Communiqué on the completion of the Kampala Dialogue and the terms of the declarations signed by the DRC government and M23.

NECESSARY ACTION

The DRC government and MONUSCO need to ensure that the protection of civilians remains a priority as they address the military threat posed by various armed groups.

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.

All perpetrators of mass atrocity crimes in the DRC, including members of the FARDC, need to be held accountable. Neighboring countries should not provide sanctuary for M23 leaders and should hand them over to the proper authorities in the DRC. MONUSCO should support the DRC government in facilitating local peacebuilding initiatives.

Together with the UN Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, the AU, ICGLR and SADC must continue to ensure that signatories to the Framework Agreement for

Peace, Security and Cooperation in the DRC fulfill their commitments. Signatories must use the momentum from the defeat of M23 to help eliminate other armed groups, particularly the FDLR and Mayi-Mayi militias, and continue diplomatic efforts aimed at greater regional cooperation to prevent recurring conflict.

MORE INFORMATION

- » [MONUSCO Website](#)
- » [Joint SADC-ICGLR Final Communiqué on the Kampala Dialogue, 12 December 2013](#)
- » [GCR2P Populations at Risk: DRC](#)

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.



BURMA/MYANMAR

Despite political reforms implemented by the government, ethnic and religious minorities in Burma/Myanmar continue to face a serious risk of mass atrocity crimes.

BACKGROUND

Outbreaks of anti-Muslim violence that first began in mid-2012 in Burma/Myanmar continue to put minority populations at serious risk of mass atrocity crimes. Sporadic attacks against Muslims have recurred since June and October 2012 when clashes broke out between Arakanese/Rakhine Buddhists and Rohingya Muslims in Arakan/Rakhine state, killing nearly 200 people. Some 140,000 people remain displaced as a result of this violence.

Government security forces have consistently failed to adequately protect civilians during outbreaks of violence and in some cases have been complicit in attacks. For example, police failed to intervene to protect victims during a 21 March 2013 massacre of over 30 Muslim students and teachers in Meikhtila despite witnessing the attack.

Rohingya Muslims in particular continue to face discriminatory state policies, including the denial of citizenship and a two-child limit for families. During June 2012 President Thein Sein asserted that Burma/Myanmar will not take responsibility for Rohingya because they are "not our ethnicity." The UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Myanmar, Tomás Ojea Quintana, has expressed concern over the "increasingly permanent" segregation of communities in Arakan/Rakhine state, with many Muslims confined to IDP camps and denied their fundamental human rights. Buddhist monk organizations have called for their deportation and have attempted to block the delivery of humanitarian aid to displaced Rohingya. Persecution has led thousands of Rohingyas to seek protection in neighboring countries.

Conditions for Burma/Myanmar's other minorities also remain grave. After 60 years of civil war, the government has reached ceasefire agreements with several ethnic armed groups. Despite this, fighting continues in Kachin, Karenni/Kayah, Karen/Kayin, Chin and Shan states. The government's armed forces (Tatmadaw) have committed

violations including extrajudicial killing, sexual violence and the recruitment of child soldiers, possibly amounting to war crimes and crimes against humanity. OCHA has said the government continues to block parts of Kachin and Shan states from access to humanitarian relief for those affected by the fighting.

ANALYSIS

While the government has been commended for introducing extensive democratic reforms, widespread abuses against several of Burma/Myanmar's minorities continue. Anti-Rohingya and anti-Muslim violence has spread and is evidence of a dangerous communal fracture that the government is failing to adequately address.

In particular, the government has taken little action towards improving the plight of the Rohingya. The government's refusal to grant them citizenship and failure to restrict anti-Rohingya hate speech enables ongoing violations of their rights.

Attacks by the Tatmadaw also pose a grave threat to civilians, particularly in Kachin state, and indicate that the military's commitment to reform remains questionable. With a pervasive culture of impunity, the military has not been held accountable for previous mass atrocity crimes. The government of Burma/Myanmar must undertake immediate measures to uphold its Responsibility to Protect.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

Following decades of political isolation and military dictatorship, democratic reforms have contributed to rapprochement between Burma/Myanmar and the international community, including the lifting of sanctions and cancellation of bilateral debt by a number of countries. Since the outbreak of anti-Muslim violence in June 2012, the UN, regional organizations and individual states have censured the government for failing to protect civilians from attacks. [For responses prior to August 2013, [see GCR2P's Timeline of International Response to the Situation of the Rohingya and Anti-Muslim Violence in Burma/Myanmar.](#)]

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Inter-Parliamentary Caucus and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation have condemned violence against Rohingya. Burma/Myanmar currently holds the chairmanship of ASEAN for 2014.

The UN General Assembly's Third Committee adopted a resolution on 19 November urging the government to address the root causes of attacks against Muslims and to grant the Rohingya equal access to full citizenship. The appeal was rejected by Burma/Myanmar's Permanent Representative to the UN, who said the government does

not recognize the term "Rohingya" and has a "sovereign right" to deny citizenship to those ineligible under its existing laws.

NECESSARY ACTION

The government of Burma/Myanmar must uphold its Responsibility to Protect all populations, regardless of their ethnicity or religion.

The government must end endemic discrimination against Rohingya, including the denial of citizenship. It must hold accountable all those who commit abuses, including inciting ethnic and religious violence. In Arakan/Rakhine state, the government must facilitate the safe, voluntary return of IDPs to their communities. Neighboring countries should offer protection to Rohingya asylum seekers.

The government must allow unhindered humanitarian access to those affected by violence in Arakan/Rakhine, Kachin and Shan states.

The international community must press the government of Burma/Myanmar to prioritize the development of a comprehensive plan to engage ethnic minorities in an inclusive reconciliation process. Remaining sanctions should only be lifted following a demonstrable improvement in the welfare of ethnic and religious minorities.

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

MORE INFORMATION

- » [Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar](#), 23 September 2013
- » [Situation of human rights in Myanmar](#), UN General Assembly, 19 November 2013
- » [GCR2P Populations at Risk: Burma/Myanmar](#)



IRAQ

Increasing sectarian violence in Iraq leaves civilians at a heightened risk of mass atrocity crimes.

BACKGROUND

Growing sectarian violence and terrorist attacks killed over 7,818 civilians in Iraq during 2013, the highest civilian death toll since the end of the 2006-2008 civil war. Coordinated attacks, often consisting of bombings of crowded civilian areas in targeted communities, continued throughout December, killing 661 civilians.

The deadliest attacks appear to be perpetrated by Sunni militant groups intent on killing Shia civilians and toppling the Iraqi government. Several religious minorities have also been the victims of targeted killings. The "Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant" (ISIL), an extremist group operating on both sides of the Iraq-Syria border and linked to al-Qaeda, has claimed responsibility for many of the attacks. On 13 January at least 25 people were killed in explosions targeting Shia areas of Baghdad.

Following the United States-led invasion in 2003, foreign troops left Iraq in 2011, transferring power to a Shia-dominated central government under Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki. Deep divisions between Sunnis and Shias remain as a legacy of the invasion and occupation, as well as from the civil war. Iraq's ethnic Kurdish minority also remains at odds with the government.

In particular, discontent has been growing among the Sunni minority, who are perceived as having dominated the country under former President Saddam Hussein. Sunnis accuse the government of exclusion from the political process, with "de-Baathification" being used as a tool for Sunni marginalization. A protest movement began in December 2012, but the government has characterized it as a terrorist movement aimed at the sectarian and territorial division of the country.

On 30 December Iraqi police stormed a Sunni protest camp in Anbar province, triggering clashes that killed at least 13

people. Two days later, ISIL attacked three police stations in separate Anbar cities and then seized large parts of Fallujah and Ramadi. Iraqi armed forces have launched a large military campaign to reassert government control.

ANALYSIS

Despite a November 2010 power-sharing agreement between political parties representing Shias, Sunnis and Kurds, many Sunnis feel they have been marginalized by the resulting Shia-led government. The government's response to the Sunni protest movement has exacerbated these divisions. Cultural identities and transnational loyalties are being manipulated by various political forces and contribute to the government's inability to resolve the security crisis.

The rising threat of al-Qaeda-linked Sunni militant groups imperils not only the stability of the government, but the lives of countless civilians who fear a possible return to sectarian civil war. While confronting the security threat posed by terrorist attacks against civilians, the government needs to address the underlying sources of conflict between Sunnis, Shias and Kurds in Iraq.

The civil war in neighboring Syria has exacerbated domestic tensions. Many Sunni and Shia radicals have joined armed groups fighting in Syria, while Prime Minister Maliki is seen by some Iraqis as being overly sympathetic to President Bashar al-Assad's government and its Iranian allies.

The Iraqi government is struggling to uphold its Responsibility to Protect.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

Despite calls for Iraqi security forces to exercise restraint and statements of concern over the increasing sectarian violence by the UN Secretary-General and UNHCR, little international action has been taken to assist the government of Iraq in upholding its Responsibility to Protect.

In a 10 January Presidential Statement the UNSC condemned ISIL attacks in Fallujah and Ramadi and the impact of the violence on civilians.

The Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Iraq, Nickolay Mladenov, has condemned the increased violence and called upon Iraqi political, religious and civil leaders, as well as the security forces, to work together to end the bloodshed and protect all civilians.

NECESSARY ACTION

Sunni, Shia and Kurdish political leaders must work to address the root causes of conflict in Iraq, including issues of regional autonomy and perceptions of sectarian discrimination. Politicians should refrain from incendiary sectarian speech and work towards national reconciliation,

including equal treatment and representation for all communities.

The government should actively discourage Iraqi fighters from becoming involved in the Syrian conflict. This should include restricting the movement of weapons and civilian fighters across the Iraqi-Syrian border.

The Iraqi government and its international supporters must ensure that the security forces comply with their obligations under international human rights law.

MORE INFORMATION

- » [UNAMI Website](#)
- » [UN Casualty Figures for December](#), 2 January 2013
- » [UNSC Presidential Statement S/PRST/2014/1](#), 10 January 2014
- » [GCR2P Populations at Risk: Iraq](#)



NIGERIA

Attacks by Boko Haram, excessive use of force by the security forces and inter-communal violence create a deadly dynamic that leaves populations at risk of crimes against humanity in Nigeria.

BACKGROUND

More than 3,000 people in Nigeria have been killed since 2009 in violence perpetrated by Boko Haram, an extremist Islamist group committed to overthrowing Nigeria's secular government, and in security forces' clashes with them.

Boko Haram, which aims to establish an Islamic state in Nigeria, targets Christians and moderate Muslims and carries out attacks on churches and mosques. The extremist group, which considers secular education "un-Islamic," has also attacked schools, killing students and teachers. Attacks on social gatherings have also become frequent. On 28 December Boko Haram militants killed at least eight people at a pre-wedding party in the Christian village of Tashan Alade, Borno state.

On 14 May, after April's "Baga massacre," when over 180 civilians were killed and more than 2,000 houses destroyed by security forces pursuing Boko Haram members, President Goodluck Jonathan declared a state of emergency in the northern states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe. In November the state of emergency was extended until May 2014. On 16 December OCHA reported that 1,224 people have died in Boko Haram-related violence in the three northern states since the imposition of the state of emergency.

Nigerian security forces have been accused of failing to provide adequate protection to vulnerable populations and of committing human rights violations as they confront Boko Haram's insurgency. On 15 October Amnesty International reported that at least 950 people suspected of being linked to Boko Haram had died in military detention in the first six months of 2013 alone. At least five civilians were killed and four villages reportedly burned down as the military responded to a Boko Haram attack on military barracks in Bama, Borno state, on 20 December.

Inter-communal conflict also continues. According to Human Rights Watch, as of December 2013 an estimated 3,000 people have been killed since 2010 in Plateau and Kaduna states during inter-communal violence. On 6 January at least 30 people were killed and 40 houses burned in Plateau state by suspected Fulani herdsman who attacked a mainly Christian village.

ANALYSIS

Civilians in northern Nigeria remain at risk of mass atrocity crimes as Boko Haram continues to target Christians, moderate Muslims, government officials, pro-government vigilantes and students. As fighting between the security forces and Boko Haram continues under the state of emergency, indiscriminate violence heightens the risk of further mass atrocity crimes.

The government has been unable to adequately protect populations in the north from the threat posed by Boko Haram or to prevent recurring inter-communal violence.

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

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

The UNSC last issued a Press Statement on Nigeria during January 2012, focusing on terrorist attacks by Boko Haram. On 1 January 2014 Nigeria started a two-year term on the UNSC.

The ICC reported in August 2013 that there is a reasonable basis to believe that Boko Haram has perpetrated crimes against humanity in Nigeria. The Office of the Prosecutor is

assessing whether the government is holding those bearing the greatest responsibility for these crimes accountable.

NECESSARY ACTION

Authorities must provide increased security at educational institutions, places of worship and other sites routinely targeted by Boko Haram in the north of the country.

Security forces deployed under the state of emergency must protect vulnerable communities in a manner that is consistent with international human rights standards. With international assistance, the government should advance security sector reform to ensure that the army and police are trained to prevent mass atrocities while respecting human rights.

The government must also address underlying causes of inter-communal violence, including youth unemployment as well as land and water rights, and prosecute those who incite or perpetrate such violence.

The AU, Economic Community of West African States and UN, along with states with significant bilateral ties to Nigeria, should assist the government as it confronts Boko Haram. These actors should urge the authorities to strengthen the rule of law and ensure accountability for all grave human rights violations.

MORE INFORMATION

- » [“Nigeria: UN rights office condemns attack on wedding convoy which killed dozens,”](#) Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 5 November 2013
- » [“Leave Everything to God: Accountability for Inter-Communal Violence in Plateau and Kaduna States,”](#) Human Rights Watch, 29 November 2013
- » [“Nigeria: Authorities Must Investigate Deaths of Boko Haram Suspects in Military Custody,”](#) Amnesty International, 15 October 2013
- » [GCR2P Populations at Risk: Nigeria](#)



PAKISTAN

Religious and ethnic minorities continue to face potential mass atrocity crimes as a result of targeted attacks on civilians in Pakistan.

BACKGROUND

Thousands of civilians from ethnic and religious minority groups have been killed in targeted attacks in Pakistan over the past decade. According to the Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies, in 2013 there were more than 200 sectarian attacks, resulting in the death of at least 650 people. Shias continue to be the focus of most sectarian violence. On 1 January 2014 an attack on Shia pilgrims near Quetta, Balochistan province, killed three people. At least three more Shias were killed in Karachi on 4 January after gunmen opened fire on a juice shop. A child was also killed following a suicide bombing outside a school in a Shia-dominated area of Hangu district, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

The end of 2013 was marked by increased sectarian clashes, terrorist bombings and targeted killings. At least ten people were killed as a result of sectarian violence in Rawalpindi, Punjab province, on 15 November when clashes broke out during a Shia procession marking Ashura, an important religious occasion. Three more people were killed in other parts of the country as the violence spread beyond Punjab province.

On 22 November the Pakistani Taliban (TTP), Pakistan's largest Sunni extremist group, bombed a Shia-dominated neighborhood of Karachi, causing nine deaths. Several high-profile sectarian assassinations, including the killing of Deputy Secretary-General of Majlis-e-Wahdat-e-Muslimeen, a Shia party, a provincial leader of the Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat, a radical Sunni organization, and the leader of Tehreek Nifaz Fiqah-e-Jafaria, a Shia organization, also occurred during December.

Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ), a Sunni militant group that was banned in Pakistan in 2001 for inciting sectarianism, is responsible for most sectarian attacks in the country.

LeJ, which has ties to TTP and al-Qaeda, considers Shias to be heretics and vows “to cleanse Pakistan of this impure nation.” LeJ has called the killing of Shias a “religious duty” and threatened to kill all Shia Hazaras, a particularly vulnerable ethnic minority. Another extremist group, Jandullah, which has ties to TTP, claimed responsibility for a 22 September suicide bomb attack on a church in Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, the deadliest attack against Pakistan’s Christian minority, which killed at least 85 people.

ANALYSIS

The ongoing persecution of ethnic and religious minorities is evidence of the government’s failure to adequately confront organized terrorist campaigns aimed not just at the Pakistani security establishment, but also at vulnerable religious and ethnic communities. The government has taken little action to encourage religious tolerance in society or to rigorously protect minority populations.

During 2013 Pakistan undertook its first transition from one civilian government to another. The newly elected government faces myriad challenges, but must make upholding its Responsibility to Protect minority populations from a sustained campaign of sectarian violence an urgent priority.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

The response of the international community to sectarian violence in Pakistan has been inadequate.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has on several occasions condemned attacks against ethnic and religious communities in Pakistan. Following the 22 September

Peshawar attack, the Secretary-General expressed concern “about the repeated acts of blind violence against religious and ethnic minorities in Pakistan.”

NECESSARY ACTION

Vulnerable minority communities in all provinces, but especially in cities routinely targeted by terrorists, such as Quetta and Karachi, must be adequately protected.

The government needs to intensify efforts to promote religious and ethnic tolerance. Pakistan’s federal and local government must work closely with religious leaders to prevent hate speech aimed at members of other religious traditions. Those who incite sectarian violence must be held legally accountable.

The UN and major donors, including the United States, Japan and the United Kingdom, should actively assist Pakistan in upholding its Responsibility to Protect through supporting programs aimed at strengthening the rule of law and promoting inter-faith and inter-communal dialogue.

MORE INFORMATION

- » “Pakistan Security Report 2013,” Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies, January 2014
- » “Pakistan: Deter Escalating Attacks on Shia Muslims,” Human Rights Watch, 11 November 2013
- » GCR2P Populations at Risk: Pakistan



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