

# R2P MONITOR

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A bimonthly bulletin by  
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.

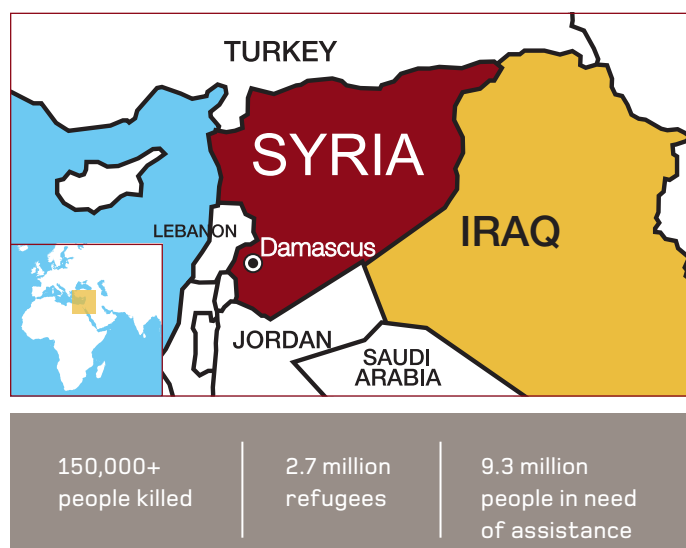
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## CURRENT CRISIS

Mass atrocity crimes are occurring and urgent action is needed.



## SYRIA

*The ongoing civil war in Syria leaves populations facing mass atrocity crimes committed by state security forces and affiliated militias. Some armed opposition groups are also committing war crimes.*

### BACKGROUND

After more than three years of conflict in Syria at least 150,000 people have been killed. There are over 2.7 million Syrian refugees in neighboring countries and over 6.5 million internally displaced persons (IDPs). Ongoing fighting has left at least 9.3 million Syrians in need of humanitarian assistance, 3.5 million of whom remain in inaccessible areas. On 24 March the UN Secretary-General said both government and rebel forces were violating UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 2139 of 22 February, which demanded a halt to attacks on civilians and immediate humanitarian access to all areas of the country.

The Syrian government continues its aerial bombardment of opposition-held residential areas. Air attacks on Aleppo reportedly killed 2,321 civilians between 1 November 2013 and 21 March 2014. Human Rights Watch documented at least 85 air strikes on Aleppo neighborhoods between the passing of UNSC Resolution 2139 and the end of April. The UN has reported that all parties to the conflict have laid sieges, trapping at least 242,000 people and further impeding access to humanitarian relief. On 7 May the government and armed rebels reached an agreement allowing rebels to retreat from Homs in exchange for sieges being lifted on two pro-government Shia towns.

A UN investigation confirmed that on 21 August 2013 a large-scale sarin attack, 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 (OPCW) team began the process of dismantling Syria's chemical weapons on 6 October. The OPCW announced on 27 April that

eight percent of Syria's chemical weapons remained inside the country, indicating that benchmarks had not been met for the entire stockpile to be destroyed by the 30 June deadline.

On 17 April the Syrian government was accused of using chlorine gas in attacks on Kfar Zeita, a village in Hama province. After the UNSC expressed concern regarding allegations of further chemical weapons use, the OPCW announced on 29 April that it would be conducting a fact-finding mission.

Government-allied militias have committed large-scale massacres in several towns and have perpetrated war crimes and gross violations of international humanitarian law (IHL) as a matter of state policy. The UN Human Rights Council-mandated Commission of Inquiry (CoI) has reported 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, and violated IHL. Several armed groups continue to target religious minorities for violent reprisals.

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. At least 3,300 people were killed during January and February as a result of clashes between various rebel groups and the extremist militia "Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant" (ISIL). Rebel infighting in the eastern province of Deir ez-Zour on 10 and 11 April resulted in over 68 people killed.

While Syria's main political opposition group, the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces (National Coalition), is widely recognized outside Syria as the legitimate representative of the Syrian people, it has not gained extensive support inside the country.

International actors continue to vie for influence in shaping the outcome of the conflict. 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.

Lebanon, which hosts over 1 million Syrian refugees, has been most severely impacted. Sporadic clashes continue between Lebanese supporters and opponents of the Assad government.

Suicide bombings have killed dozens of people during 2014. Hezbollah has directly engaged in fighting against Syrian rebels on both sides of the Syria-Lebanon border and has vowed to remain militarily active inside Syria.

The first two rounds of the “Geneva II” peace conference, aimed at ending the violence and establishing a transitional governing body in Syria, took place from 22 to 31 January and 10 to 15 February, respectively. Representatives from the Syrian government and opposition, as well as approximately 40 other countries and regional organizations, attended. No substantive progress towards a political solution was made. On 13 May the UN-League of Arab States Special Representative, Lakhdar Brahimi, announced he will resign on 31 May, citing limited prospects for settling the conflict.

The government has announced a presidential election will be held on 3 June. President Assad is expected to win a new term.

## ANALYSIS

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 government continues to utilize its military resources to retain power at all costs and perpetrate ongoing crimes against humanity and war crimes. With superior capabilities and external assistance, the Syrian government has been able to make significant military gains in several provinces.

The fracturing and radicalization of the opposition has strengthened the position of the government and compounded the difficulty of achieving a negotiated political settlement to the conflict. ISIL and several other armed groups 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. Sanctions have had limited success as Syria’s few remaining allies continue to provide crucial economic insulation. Despite passing Resolution 2139, long-standing divisions within the UNSC over Syria have allowed the situation to deteriorate to the point where few options for a peaceful political solution exist. Nevertheless, it remains imperative that diplomatic efforts continue.

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. [For responses prior to February 2014, [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. However, on 27 September 2013 the UNSC adopted Resolution 2118, enabling the expeditious destruction of Syria’s chemical weapons. On 22 February 2014 the UNSC unanimously adopted Resolution 2139, demanding that all parties immediately allow unhindered humanitarian access to civilians in need. The resolution noted the government’s “primary responsibility to protect.”

The UN Human Rights Council has adopted 12 resolutions condemning atrocities in Syria. The most recent, passed on 28 March, extended the mandate of the CoI for one year, condemned violations of IHL and international human rights law and demanded that the government uphold its responsibility to protect.

On 25 March the League of Arab States began an annual summit in Kuwait, where Special Representative Brahimi appealed for an end the flow of weapons to armed groups in Syria.

On 15 April the UNSC held an informal meeting during which the “Caesar Report” was presented. The report, written by three former war crimes prosecutors, analyzes photos of 11,000 detainees who were allegedly tortured and killed between 2011 and 2013 in Syrian government detention centers.

## 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, in keeping with UNSC Resolution 2139.

The UNSC needs to take proximate steps to end atrocities in Syria, including imposing an arms embargo and immediately 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.

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 towards finding a political solution to the conflict and increasing humanitarian assistance to populations trapped or displaced by the civil war.

## MORE INFORMATION

- » [UNSC Resolution S/RES/2139](#), 22 February 2014
- » [Situation of human rights in Syria](#), Human Rights Council, 28 March 2014
- » [Syria: Unlawful Air Attacks Terrorize Aleppo](#), Human Rights Watch, 24 March 2014
- » [GCR2P Populations at Risk: Syria](#)



567,635 IDPs

2.6 million  
people in need  
of assistance80 percent of  
Muslims killed  
or displaced

## CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

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

### BACKGROUND

Violence against civilians remains pervasive throughout the Central African Republic (CAR). The Muslim population is being systematically targeted by predominantly Christian "anti-balaka" (anti-machete) militias and mobs of civilians. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) stated that targeted violence against Muslims constitutes "massive ethno-religious cleansing." Eighty percent of the country's Muslim population has been forced to flee or has been killed and the remaining 15,000-20,000 are at high risk of further attack.

Formed largely in response to abuses by the Séléka rebel alliance, who overthrew former President Francois Bozizé on 24 March 2013, anti-balaka militias have conducted vicious reprisals against Muslims and other groups and are now responsible for the majority of attacks on civilians. Ex-Séléka forces have retreated from Bangui and are re-grouping in the north and east of the country, where they continue to pose a direct threat to civilians. The predominantly Muslim Séléka fighters were previously responsible for grave human rights abuses perpetrated against the majority Christian population. Following a meeting from 6 to 10 May, the ex-Séléka appointed a new leader. Reports indicate the group is seeking to reorganize and establish a base of operations in Bambari.

Despite the deployment of French and African Union (AU) peacekeepers following the rapid deterioration of the situation between 5 and 6 December 2013, the plight of civilians remains desperate. UNHCR estimates that at least 15,000 Muslims and ethnic Peuhls in 11 communities are at a "very high risk" of attack.

The UN and humanitarian organizations, with the assistance of French and AU peacekeepers, have begun relocating some

vulnerable civilians. On 11 April 550 Muslims were escorted from Ecole Liberté in Bossangoa to Goré, Chad. On 21 April French and AU peacekeepers escorted 93 Muslim civilians from Bangui to Bambari in eastern CAR. An additional 1,259 Muslims were evacuated from Bangui to Moyen-Sido and Kabo in northern CAR on 27 April. Despite an AU military escort the convoy came under attack by anti-balaka fighters in Dissikou on 28 April, leaving two people dead.

Fighting between anti-balaka factions, ex-Séléka forces and other armed groups has intensified in central, eastern and northern prefectures. More than 100 people have been killed in clashes between ex-Séléka forces and armed Fulani tribesmen in Markounda and Paoua since 25 April. On 26 April 16 civilians, including 3 staff from Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), were killed during an armed attack on a MSF health facility in Boguila. On 1 May at least 22 civilians were killed in Mala in clashes between anti-balaka and ex-Séléka.

Over 360,760 civilians have sought refuge in neighboring countries and there are currently more than 567,635 IDPs in CAR, including at least 142,600 people spread across 41 sites in Bangui. Only 29 percent of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs' (OCHA) humanitarian appeal for CAR has been fulfilled.

The transitional government, led by interim President Catherine Samba-Panza, is struggling to adequately respond to the crisis. As extreme levels of violence and displacement continue, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has warned that the "de-facto partition" of the country along ethno-religious grounds is a possibility.

### ANALYSIS

CAR has suffered decades of poor governance, recurring political instability and humanitarian crisis. Since March 2013 the state has effectively ceased to function. The interim government cannot prevent various armed groups and civilian mobs from perpetrating attacks. Physical protection also remains a serious concern for government officials. The interim government does not currently appear to have an effective strategy for the protection and relocation of vulnerable populations or the promotion of national reconciliation.

Political and military elites seeking to maintain or gain power, including those linked to the ex-Séléka, anti-balaka and former President Bozizé, are exacerbating the crisis. Religious and ethnic identity has also been manipulated, with communities mobilized against one another. Deadly attacks continue to be conducted openly, without fear of sanction.

Intensified fighting between anti-balaka, ex-Séléka and other armed groups, as well as between international peacekeepers and armed groups, has increased the risks to civilians. Members of the national armed forces and police are increasingly involved in attacks against civilians and peacekeepers.

Despite the efforts of French and AU peacekeepers, civilians have not been afforded adequate protection from mass atrocity crimes. The AU peacekeeping force (MISCA) also continues to face critical operational gaps and credibility issues as a result of the conduct of some of its contingents. International peacekeepers have also been unable to stop widespread criminality and looting, as they are unable to detain perpetrators. On 1 May the Operations Director of OCHA, John Ging, stated that the response to the situation in CAR “has not been mobilized on the scale or in the timeframe needed to solve the problem.”

Accelerating the political transition and preparing to hold elections without significant improvements in security, accountability and reconciliation amongst communities will only increase the risk of further mass atrocity crimes being perpetrated.

CAR's interim government is currently unable to uphold its Responsibility to Protect and requires urgent assistance.

## INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

Following the deadly surge of violence during late 2013, the international community intensified its response to the crisis in CAR, including passing three UNSC resolutions between October 2013 and January 2014 that emphasized the interim government's responsibility to protect the civilian population. [For responses prior to April 2014, [see GCR2P's Timeline of the International Response to the Situation in CAR.](#)]

France currently has 2,000 troops deployed in CAR under the aegis of Operation Sangaris, while the AU has deployed 4,990 MISCA peacekeepers. The Chadian contingent of MISCA, consisting of 833 troops, withdrew from CAR on 13 April following an incident in Bangui that left over 30 civilians killed. Three French and twenty-five AU peacekeepers have been killed since 5 December.

The European Union (EU) formally launched its military operation (EUFOR-RCA) on 1 April. The mission assumed authority for security at Bangui M'Poko airport and is also charged with protecting civilians in the 3rd and 5th districts of Bangui.

During a 5 April visit to CAR the UN Secretary-General urged the international community to act quickly to halt atrocities, stating, “the world agreed on our collective responsibility to protect a population when the state is unwilling or unable to do that basic job. The people of CAR should not have to run and die while the world decides whether to keep its promise.”

On 10 April the UNSC passed Resolution 2149, emphasizing the CAR authorities' primary responsibility to protect their population. The resolution authorized the deployment of the UN Multi-dimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), which is expected to consist of 10,000 troops and 1,800 police. MINUSCA is mandated to protect civilians, support the political transition, facilitate humanitarian

assistance and promote human rights and accountability. It will assume authority from MISCA on 15 September 2014.

## NECESSARY ACTION

The interim government must publicly condemn all attacks on civilians, including against the Muslim minority. It is essential that perpetrators responsible for violence be brought to justice. Local efforts to ease tensions between communities should be supported by international mediators and should be part of a broader strategy of working with CAR's authorities on national reconciliation.

French, AU and EU forces must disarm all armed groups who threaten civilians. Vulnerable civilians, especially those in IDP encampments and besieged areas, must be robustly protected and provided adequate access to humanitarian relief. Enhanced protection must also be provided during evacuation and relocation operations.

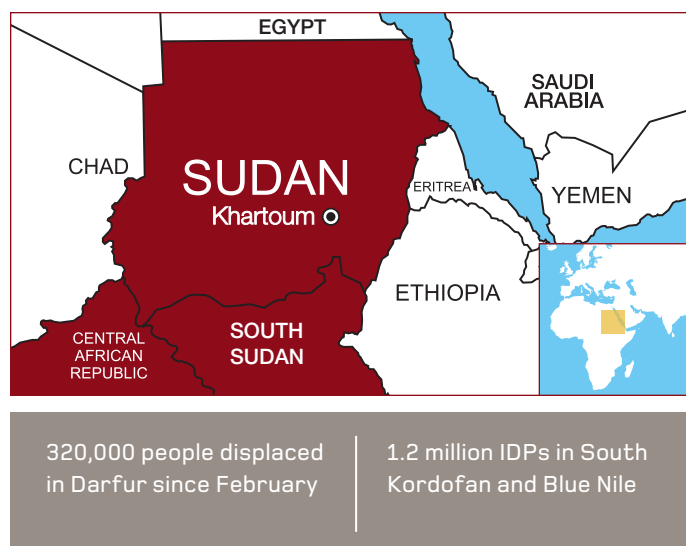
International peacekeepers must work alongside local security forces to ensure physical protection is afforded to government officials and infrastructure, such as courts and prisons. Additional troops, including formed police units, should be expeditiously deployed. Logistical support to MISCA must be increased, including the provision of air assets. The AU should immediately convene a force generation conference to replace the loss of the Chadian contingent. There is an urgent need to increase funding for humanitarian assistance in advance of the rainy season.

The re-hatting of troops that will participate in MINUSCA must strictly abide by the UN Human Rights Due Diligence Policy.

## MORE INFORMATION

- » [MINUSCA Website](#)
- » [UNSC Resolution S/RES/2134](#), 28 January 2014
- » [UNSC Resolution S/RES/2149](#), 10 April 2014
- » [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 in Darfur are also at risk of mass atrocities due to escalating inter-communal violence and attacks by government-sponsored forces.*

### 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 and their allied paramilitaries, the Popular Defense Forces (PDF), have committed war crimes, including extra-judicial killing, forced displacement and sexual violence against civilians in South Kordofan and Blue Nile. 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, including the 14 December 2013 shelling of civilian areas of Kadugli, South Kordofan, in direct violation of IHL.

Heavy fighting between the SAF and the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF), an umbrella organization consisting of the SPLM-N and other armed rebel groups, has been reported since mid-November in South Kordofan. The Satellite Sentinel Project has used satellite imagery to confirm large-scale aerial bombardment of civilian areas by the SAF in Buram and Dilling counties, South Kordofan. The SAF conducted indiscriminate aerial bombardments on Yabus, Blue Nile, on 27 January and Korongo, South Kordofan, on 31 January. The SAF also bombed a medical facility in South Kordofan on 1 and 2 May.

On 14 April Sudan's Defence Minister announced the start of a summer offensive against the SPLM-N, noting that troops would be transferred to the Nuba Mountains from Darfur and other regions. As part of this campaign, the SAF intensified attacks against SPLM-N positions in South Kordofan, including a combined air and ground assault on Rashad from 16 to 20 April.

The ongoing conflict has led to the internal displacement of over 1.2 million civilians while more than 239,700 have fled to South Sudan and Ethiopia. Recent violence in South Sudan has resulted in some refugees returning. The government continues to block UN agencies, international humanitarian organizations and independent media from access to rebel-held areas in South Kordofan and Blue Nile. On 1 February the government ordered the International Committee of the Red Cross to halt its operations in Sudan.

Sudan has consistently failed to honor AU-brokered agreements and UNSC resolutions calling for a cessation of hostilities. Direct negotiations between the government of Sudan and the SPLM-N commenced on 13 February following an invitation from the AU High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) for Sudan. The talks adjourned on 18 February with the AUHIP proposing a new draft framework agreement.

The governor of South Kordofan alleged that the SPLM-N shelled Kadugli immediately after the suspension of talks. Both parties resumed negotiations on 28 February, but by 2 March these had broken down again and the AUHIP referred the issue to the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC). On 12 March the PSC announced a 30 April deadline for the government and SPLM-N to reach a settlement to end the conflict.

The security situation in Darfur has also deteriorated as a result of escalating inter-communal violence and renewed SAF ground and air operations. Intensified fighting between the SAF and rebel groups has contributed to the displacement of 320,000 people so far this year. The SAF launched a bombing campaign on East Jebel Marra on 18 March, which resulted in civilian casualties and the displacement of over 15,000 people.

Since late February the government-sponsored Rapid Support Forces (RSF), a mixed force of SAF and various militias, has targeted villages in South Darfur resulting in civilian fatalities, destruction of property and displacement of over 45,000 people. The RSF has also launched attacks in Jebel Marra and North Darfur, including in Kutum on 26 March. RSF units are also reportedly operating in South Kordofan.

The AU-UN Hybrid peacekeeping force in Darfur (UNAMID), which consists of approximately 14,500 troops and 4,500 police, has criticized the government for restricting its ability to uphold its civilian protection mandate.

### 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.

Two years since the adoption of Resolution 2046, the UNSC and AU have failed to push the government of Sudan and the SPLM-N to honor agreements to cease hostilities and allow the delivery of humanitarian aid to South Kordofan and Blue Nile.

Despite the presence of UNAMID, the security situation in Darfur continues to deteriorate. Recent inter-communal violence and the expanded operations of the SAF and RSF contribute 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 March 2014, [see GCR2P's Timeline of International Response to the Situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States](#).]

Acting on behalf of the AUHIP for Sudan, former South African President Thabo Mbeki has facilitated regular talks between the government of Sudan and the SPLM-N since 2011.

The UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, and the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, issued statements on 10 and 11 March, respectively, expressing concern regarding the situation in South Darfur and calling for the government to protect civilians.

The UNSC issued a Press Statement on 17 March calling upon the government of Sudan and the SPLM-N to cease hostilities and reach a comprehensive settlement to the conflicts in South Kordofan and Blue Nile in accordance with Resolution 2046. It also called upon both parties to refrain from attacking civilians.

On 27 March the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Sudan and the deputy head of UNAMID issued a joint statement expressing concern over escalating violence in Darfur.

## NECESSARY ACTION

The government of Sudan and the SPLM-N, in accordance UNSC Resolution 2046, 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 the government of Sudan and the SPLM-N facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance to populations in South Kordofan and Blue Nile, as stipulated in the 2011 Framework Agreement and 2012 cooperation agreements. States with major investments in Sudan, including China, Qatar and Saudi Arabia, should press the government to fulfill its commitments.

UNAMID forces must robustly protect civilians facing an imminent threat of violence, in line with its civilian protection obligations, and facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Mediation efforts should be renewed between the government of Sudan and armed groups operating in Darfur. The government of Sudan must stop obstructing UNAMID.

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.

## MORE INFORMATION

- » [UNISFA Website](#)
- » [UNAMID Website](#)
- » [UNSC Press Statement SC/11321](#), 17 March 2014
- » [GCR2P Populations at Risk: Sudan](#)



10,000+ people killed since 15 December	79,000 civilians sheltering in 9 UN bases	923,000 IDPs since 15 December
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## SOUTH SUDAN

*Political divisions within South Sudan have resulted in heavy fighting and mass atrocities committed by both government and rebel forces, plunging the country into civil war. Ethnic mobilization threatens wider inter-communal violence.*

### BACKGROUND

Civilians in South Sudan, particularly in Bentiu, Bor, Malakal and Nasir, face an ongoing risk of mass atrocity crimes following the 14 April capture of Bentiu by the Sudan People's Liberation Army in Opposition (SPLA I/O).

The ongoing civil war is the result of a conflict that started between Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) soldiers from rival political and ethnic groups. The crisis has left over 10,000 people dead and 923,000 displaced since 15 December, while over 289,000 have fled to neighboring countries. The fighting began after President Salva Kiir accused Riek Machar, the former Vice-President who was removed from office during July 2013, of an attempted coup.

Despite reaching a Cessation of Hostilities (COH) agreement on 23 January, the SPLA I/O launched a major offensive to capture Bentiu on 14 April, forcing 17,000 civilians to seek protection in a UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) base. After capturing Bentiu on 15 April, SPLA I/O forces reportedly killed 200 civilians in Kali-Ballee Mosque on the basis of their ethnicity. Targeted ethnic killings of civilians also took place in a Bentiu hospital, a vacated World Food Programme compound and a local church. The SPLA I/O reportedly used Radio Bentiu FM to broadcast hate speech, including inciting sexual violence against ethnic Dinkas. The government launched a counter-offensive to retake Bentiu on 4 May, but at the time of publication it was unclear who controlled the city. Heavy fighting was also reported in parts of Upper Nile State, including Renk and Nassir.

In neighboring Jonglei state, on 17 April over 300 armed Dinka youths attacked the UN base in Bor, where 5,000 civilians were sheltering. Although UNMISS peacekeepers were able to repel

the attack, at least 50 civilians were killed. In response, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, and the Special Adviser for the Prevention of Genocide, Adama Dieng, led a joint mission to South Sudan. Special Adviser Dieng warned the UNSC on 2 May that there were elements of the conflict that could be "categorized as risk factors of genocide and other atrocity crimes."

The worst fighting continues to be between ethnic Dinka and Nuer soldiers loyal to the President and former Vice-President, respectively. Both sides have been accused of targeting civilians based upon their ethnicity and presumed political allegiances. In a report released on 8 May UNMISS documented human rights violations, which it argues provide "reasonable grounds to believe that crimes against humanity have been committed during the conflict by both Government and opposition forces."

Approximately 79,000 people have sought refuge in nine designated sites within UNMISS bases across the country, including nearly 32,000 people at two sites in Juba. OCHA has noted that maintaining law and order within some UN compounds is becoming increasingly difficult, with reports of ethnic violence between IDPs. OCHA ranked South Sudan as a "Level-3" humanitarian emergency and the "serious deterioration in the food security situation" has left an estimated 3.7 million people at high risk of famine. Ahead of the rainy season the UN is constructing additional sites in Juba, Malakal and Bor to provide shelter and protection for IDPs.

Shortly after the adoption of the COH, The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) established a Monitoring and Verification Mechanism to investigate compliance with the agreement. This included three monitoring teams deployed in Bor, Malakal and Bentiu. However, both sides violated the COH, with fighting continuing in Western Bahr el Ghazal, Jonglei, Unity, Upper Nile and Lakes states.

Due to ongoing security concerns and a lack of personnel, UNMISS has been unable to frequently patrol outside of their bases. The UNSC adopted Resolution 2132 on 24 December, temporarily enlarging UNMISS by an additional 5,500 troops and 440 police. Only an estimated 800 of these troops have deployed so far. UNMISS police contingents are undertaking disarmament campaigns at all UN sites where civilians are sheltering.

The government has become increasingly critical of UNMISS, with hostile statements made by numerous senior officials. Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) violations, including attempts by the SPLA to forcibly enter UNMISS bases, have affected the mission's ability to uphold its protection of civilians mandate.

Following direct negotiations, President Kiir and Machar signed a peace deal on 9 May.

### ANALYSIS

The high number of casualties and large-scale displacement since 15 December illustrate the severity of the crisis



confronting South Sudan. The rapid descent into civil war highlights the fragility of the government as well as the SPLA's political and ethnic divisions, which have allegedly resulted in 70 percent of the SPLA either defecting or deserting.

Parties to the conflict have used heavy weaponry against civilian areas, reportedly recruited over 9,000 child soldiers, perpetrated sexual violence and destroyed and looted property. Intense fighting and ethnic targeting after the fall of Bentiu has heightened the risk of further atrocities.

UNMISS and humanitarian agencies continue to face severe difficulties in accessing areas where civilians have been displaced by ongoing fighting. The start of the rainy season during late May will further hamper UNMISS' ability to protect civilians as most roads will be flooded.

The ethnic dimension to the conflict increases 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. Cycles of inter-communal violence in Jonglei state have claimed thousands of lives in recent years. The absence of accountability for previous atrocities perpetuates recurring ethnic mobilization and targeted violence.

The government of South Sudan requires international assistance to reestablish security throughout the country and ensure accountability for mass atrocity crimes. With resource deficits and challenges to their mobility, UNMISS is struggling to support the government in upholding its Responsibility to Protect.

## INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

UNMISS has approximately 8,500 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."

The AU announced the establishment of a Commission of Inquiry on 7 March. Headed by former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, the Commission will investigate human rights violations committed since 15 December and make recommendations on appropriate accountability and reconciliation measures.

The UN Human Rights Council issued a Presidential Statement on 24 March expressing concern over the human rights situation in South Sudan, welcoming the AU's Commission of Inquiry and calling upon all parties to adhere to the COH.

The UNSC issued two Press Statements on 18 and 24 April condemning the ethnic targeting of civilians in Bentiu and the attack on UN bases in Bor, noting that these acts "may constitute a war crime" and threatening sanctions should COH violations continue.

Following his visit to South Sudan, Special Adviser Dieng called upon the leaders of South Sudan, as well as the regional and

international community, "to take immediate measures to end the violence and uphold our collective responsibility to protect the populations of South Sudan."

In its 8 May report UNMISS asserted that "in line with its obligations under international humanitarian law, the law of state responsibility and the responsibility to protect, the international community must support domestic accountability efforts."

## NECESSARY ACTION

All parties to the conflict must uphold their Responsibility to Protect. President Kiir and Machar must abide by the commitments made under the COH and continue to engage with IGAD to resolve the crisis. The UNSC, AU and major international supporters of South Sudan, especially the United States, should assist in mediation efforts.

The UNSC should revise UNMISS' mandate to prioritize civilian protection. The international community should enhance UNMISS' capabilities through the rapid provision of additional troops. The supply of additional tactical and utility helicopters could assist surveillance efforts aimed at detecting and deterring potential attacks upon vulnerable communities.

UNMISS' Human Rights Division must continue its investigations of extra-judicial killings and possible mass graves. The AU Commission of Inquiry should initiate investigations as soon as possible. The UN should actively assist the Commission in its work.

The government must ensure that UNMISS has the ability to move freely to all parts of the country. It must stop officials from inciting public hostility against UNMISS, endangering the security of the mission and its personnel. The government must hold all perpetrators of mass atrocities accountable, regardless of their affiliation or position.

The government of South Sudan must initiate a comprehensive strategy aimed at ethnic and political reconciliation. This must include justice for victims, including those targeted during inter-communal violence in Jonglei state and elsewhere. It is critical that members of civil society participate in the process.

## MORE INFORMATION:

- » [UNMISS Website](#)
- » [UNMISS Report on Human Rights: Crisis in South Sudan](#), 8 May 2014
- » [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.



1,500+ people  
killed since  
January 2014

470,000+ IDPs  
since May 2013

200+ schoolgirls  
abducted in  
Chibok

## NIGERIA

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

### BACKGROUND

The extremist group Boko Haram, which has been perpetrating attacks against civilians since 2009, is committed to overthrowing Nigeria's secular government and establishing an Islamic state. In its attacks the group targets Christians and moderate Muslims, bombing churches and mosques. Boko Haram's leader, Abubakar Shekau, vowed to kill all Muslims who "follow democracy" and has said that Boko Haram is at war "against Christians and democracy and their constitution." According to the UNHCR, Boko Haram-related violence has displaced more than 470,000 people since May 2013 while more than 57,000 have taken refuge in neighboring countries.

Despite the state of emergency, which was declared by President Goodluck Jonathan for Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states during May 2013, Boko Haram attacks have escalated, particularly in rural areas. Amnesty International reported that at least 1,500 people, mostly civilians, were killed in northeastern Nigeria in the first quarter of 2014 by either Boko Haram or Nigerian security forces and civilian vigilante groups.

During April there were consistent attacks by Boko Haram in Borno state. A senior government official announced that at least 135 people were killed by Boko Haram between 9 and 12

April. An additional 60 people were killed on 13 April in Amchaka and nearby villages.

Boko Haram considers secular education "un-Islamic" and often attacks schools, killing students and teachers. On 14 April Boko Haram abducted more than 230 girls from a boarding school in Chibok. While some students escaped, more than 200 are still being held by Boko Haram.

The unprecedented surge in Boko Haram violence during April also included attacks outside of areas significantly affected by Boko Haram violence in the past, including in Jigawa state. On 14 April Boko Haram perpetrated its first bomb attack in Abuja in nearly two years, killing at least 75 people. On 1 May another blast occurred in a suburb of Abuja, resulting in at least 19 deaths. Boko Haram also attacked and razed the town of Gamboru Ngala in northeastern Nigeria on 5 May, massacring several hundred people.

Nigerian security forces have been consistently accused of failing to provide adequate protection to civilians from Boko Haram's attacks and of committing widespread human rights violations, including extrajudicial killings, as they confront the group.

Inter-communal conflict also continues in Nigeria. Clashes between Fulani herdsman and Christian villagers resulted in over 200 deaths during March in Kaduna, Katsina and Benue states. More than 90 people were killed in similar violence in Zamfara and Taraba states during April. A land dispute between ethnic Eggon and the Gwandara on 25 and 26 April in Nasarawa state led to at least 34 deaths.

### 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 possible crimes against humanity. The Nigerian government has recently announced several major programs to address poverty and underdevelopment in the northeast, in addition to ongoing military efforts aimed at defeating Boko Haram. Social initiatives and political reforms remain important to confronting the root causes of conflict in northern Nigeria.

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 in central

Nigeria. The security forces' alleged acts of arbitrary detention and extra-judicial killing of suspected Boko Haram members violate international human rights law. Despite the state of emergency, Boko Haram attacks pose a fundamental threat to the safety and security of Nigerian civilians.

Inter-communal conflict in Nigeria stems from a number of sources, including poverty, disputes over land and water rights, widespread corruption and the manipulation of religious and ethnic identities to serve political and economic interests. General elections scheduled for 2015 may further exacerbate these tensions.

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

## INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

The ICC reported during August 2013 that there is a reasonable basis to believe that Boko Haram has perpetrated crimes against humanity.

On 4 March the head of the UN Office for West Africa, Said Djinnit, strongly condemned the "unprecedented cycle of violence" that is killing innocent civilians in Nigeria.

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, released a statement on 14 March during a visit to Nigeria, noting that many of the people she met "openly acknowledge human rights violations have been committed by the security forces, and these have served to alienate local communities, and create fertile ground for Boko Haram to cultivate new recruits."

On 16 April a spokesman for the UN Secretary-General and UN Children's Fund strongly condemned the abduction of the Chibok school girls and called for their immediate release. On 6 May the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights warned perpetrators that acts related to sexual slavery can constitute crimes against humanity. On 7 May President Jonathan accepted an offer from the United States to provide assistance in finding and freeing the Chibok schoolgirls. China, France and the United Kingdom have also offered assistance.

## NECESSARY ACTION

The government must provide increased security in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states, particularly at educational institutions, places of worship and other sites routinely targeted by Boko Haram.

Reforms undertaken as part of the government's "soft approach" to undermine the Boko Haram insurgency should be expanded to central and northwestern states in order to address the underlying causes of inter-communal conflict.

Security forces must protect vulnerable communities, including displaced persons, 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 UN, AU and Economic Community of West African States, along with states with significant bilateral ties to Nigeria, should assist the government in upholding its Responsibility to Protect its population. These actors should urge the authorities to strengthen the rule of law and ensure accountability for all grave human rights violations.

As Nigeria prepares for the 2015 general elections, politicians from all parties should refrain from inflammatory statements that could deepen religious, ethnic and inter-communal divisions.

## MORE INFORMATION

- » "Nigeria: More Than 1,500 Killed In Armed Conflict in North-Eastern Nigeria in Early 2014," Amnesty International, 31 March 2014
- » "Statement Attributable to the Spokesman for the Secretary-General on attacks in Borno State, Nigeria," 16 April 2014
- » GCR2P Populations at Risk: Nigeria



2.6 million IDPs

20+ armed groups  
still operating in the  
eastern DRC

## 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. Although M23 surrendered on 5 November 2013, civilians are still threatened by other armed groups.

The government of the DRC estimates that there are more than 20 armed groups operating in the eastern DRC, many of which increased their activities in the security vacuum created by redeployment of FARDC troops to confront M23. 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 two years. The government recorded over 15,000 incidents of sexual and gender-based violence in these four regions during 2013. There are currently more than 2.6 million IDPs in the DRC, most of whom have fled violence in areas where these armed groups are active.

The government has recently launched offensives against groups in the eastern DRC with assistance from the UN mission in the DRC (MONUSCO), which operates with a protection of civilians mandate and includes an intervention brigade. In response to attacks by the Allied Democratic Forces-Nalu (ADF-Nalu), an alliance of Ugandan rebel groups operating in Beni and Kamango in North Kivu, the FARDC initiated an offensive in early January and declared victory over the group on 14 March. The government announced that following the defeat of ADF-Nalu it would direct its attention towards eliminating the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR).

On 31 March the FARDC also launched operations against the Patriotic Force of Resistance in Ituri (FRPI), which has previously perpetrated crimes against humanity. In advance of these offensives, the government and MONUSCO encouraged militias to participate in Disarmament, Demobilization, Repatriation, Reintegration and Resettlement (DDRRR) programs. The FARDC and MONUSCO have also targeted the bases of the Alliance for a Free and Sovereign Congo (APCLS). APCLS reportedly attacked FARDC troops in North Kivu on 30 April, resulting in further civilian displacement.

According to OCHA, as of 2 April there were over 500,000 IDPs in Katanga as a result of attacks by Mayi-Mayi Kata Katanga. The UN has reported a serious deterioration of the situation since October 2013, including Mayi-Mayi Kata Katanga perpetrating a "scorched earth" campaign against civilians.

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. During 2013 the government sentenced 61 members of the national defense and security forces who were found guilty of sexual violence. However, only two soldiers have been convicted for the rapes in Minova.

## ANALYSIS

Despite ongoing military offensives and M23's defeat, the threat posed by other armed groups remains high. The weakness of government structures undermines attempts to prevent atrocities and protect civilians. Ongoing FARDC and MONUSCO offensives against various rebel groups have also resulted in further displacement of vulnerable populations.

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. Refugee flows into northern DRC from conflicts in neighboring 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 contribute 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 to halt atrocities committed by other armed groups, especially the FDLR.

## INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

The international community has responded to violence in the eastern DRC by taking diplomatic, political and military measures to confront various armed groups. [For responses prior to January 2014, [see GCR2P's Timeline of International Response to the Situation in the DRC.](#)]

MONUSCO is responsible for more than 21,000 UN personnel operating under a civilian protection mandate. Since 2002 the UN has facilitated a reduction in membership of various armed groups through its DDRRR program. MONUSCO is currently redeploying personnel to the eastern DRC where it expects more than two thirds of its staff will be based by July 2014. On 28 March the UNSC extended the mandate of MONUSCO until 31 March 2015. The renewed mandate emphasized the need for MONUSCO to assist the government with security sector reform and DDRRR, facilitate expanded accountability for mass atrocity crimes and combat the FDLR.

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 23 January 2014 the UN Group of Experts on the DRC released their final report for 2013, alleging that despite M23's surrender, the rebels continue to receive support from neighboring countries.

The Regional Oversight Mechanism of the Framework Agreement for Peace, Security and Cooperation in the DRC and the Great Lakes Region held its third meeting on 31 January on the sidelines of the AU Summit. The International Conference for the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) held a Mini Summit on 25 March

to discuss the situation in the eastern DRC, addressing efforts undertaken to eliminate the FDLR, ADF-Nalu and M23.

On 7 March the ICC found Germain Katanga, former leader of the FRPI, guilty of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Ituri during 2003.

On 25 March the UN Human Rights Council held a high-level dialogue on combatting sexual violence in the DRC, during which High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay asserted that sexual and gender-based violence remains “alarmingly prevalent.”

## NECESSARY ACTION

The DRC government and MONUSCO need to ensure that the protection of civilians remains the primary priority as they address the military threat posed by various armed groups. MONUSCO troops redeployed to the eastern DRC must actively patrol and protect civilians from armed groups. MONUSCO should support the DRC government in facilitating local peacebuilding initiatives and encourage civil society to participate in DDRRR initiatives.

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. The government should adopt legislation establishing specialized mixed chambers in the national judicial system to ensure justice for crimes against humanity. The government must increase efforts to restore state authority in the eastern DRC.

Together with the UN Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, the AU, ICGLR and Southern African Development Community must continue to ensure that signatories to the Framework Agreement for Peace, Security and Cooperation in the DRC fulfill their commitments. Signatories must continue diplomatic efforts aimed at greater regional cooperation to prevent recurring conflict.

## MORE INFORMATION

- » [MONUSCO Website](#)
- » [UNSC Resolution S/RES/2147](#), 28 March 2014
- » [GCR2P Populations at Risk: DRC](#)



138,000 people still displaced by 2012 ethnic violence in Arakan/Rakhine state

2,000 Muslims displaced by latest violence in Maungdaw township

## BURMA/MYANMAR

*Ethnic and religious minorities in Burma/Myanmar, especially stateless Rohingya and other Muslims, continue to face the threat of mass atrocity crimes.*

### BACKGROUND

Sporadic anti-Muslim violence in Burma/Myanmar continues to put minority populations, particularly the Rohingya, at imminent risk of mass atrocity crimes. Between 9 and 13 January 2014 at least 40 Rohingyas were attacked and killed by Buddhist residents in Maungdaw Township, Arakan/Rakhine state. The central government has denied the attacks took place. However, MSF reported treating 22 patients with “violence-related injuries.” The government has since ordered MSF to cease operations in Arakan/Rakhine state.

On 26 March Buddhists began two days of attacks on the offices and residences of international aid groups and UN agencies working in Sittwe, Arakan/Rakhine state, forcing over 170 international staff out of the region. The government established an Investigation Commission and expressed its commitment to bringing perpetrators of violence to justice, but the UN Children’s Fund reported on 3 April that life-saving assistance to displaced people remains “seriously disrupted.” On 7 April the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Myanmar, Tomás Ojea Quintana, said that recent developments “are the latest in a long history of discrimination and persecution against the Rohingya community which could amount to crimes against humanity,” and warned that the evacuation of aid workers “will only increase the vulnerability of this community.”

Rohingyas continue to face discriminatory state policies, including the denial of citizenship and a two-child limit for families. From 30 March to 10 April the country undertook its first census since 1983. Despite assurances from the government that it would allow the self-identification of any ethnicity, just days before the census began it announced it would not recognize “Rohingya.”



Special Rapporteur 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. Persecution has led thousands of Rohingyas to seek protection in neighboring countries, where they are often subject to further abuse, human trafficking and refoulement.

Sporadic attacks against the broader Muslim community have recurred since June and October 2012 when clashes broke out in Arakan/Rakhine state, killing nearly 200 people. An estimated 138,000 people remain displaced as a result of this violence. Security forces have failed to adequately protect civilians and in some cases have been complicit in attacks on Muslims.

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 previously 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 affected parts of Kachin and Shan states from access to humanitarian relief.

## 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 is evidence of a grave communal fracture that the government is failing to adequately address. The refusal to grant Rohingya access to citizenship or lift discriminatory state policies, as well as its failure to restrict anti-Rohingya hate speech, encourages ongoing violations of their most fundamental human rights. Denying Rohingyas the ability to self-identify on the census constitutes a failure to comply with international human rights standards and reinforces the dangerous perception that Rohingyas are ethnic outsiders.

The attacks on humanitarian workers in Sittwe occurred amid growing hostility towards international efforts to assist Rohingyas.

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 is failing to uphold its primary 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. On 26 March Japan announced a \$16 million contribution to support UN programs in Burma/Myanmar as part of a \$75.2 million aid package that will also fund government development projects.

Since the outbreak of anti-Muslim violence during June 2012, the UN, regional organizations and individual states have censured the government for failing to protect civilians from attacks. [For responses prior to January 2014, 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 condemned violence against Rohingya during 2013. Burma/Myanmar holds the chairmanship of ASEAN for 2014.

Following the events in Maungdaw Township, UN officials, including the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, and the Humanitarian Affairs Coordinator, Valerie Amos, condemned the attacks and called for an impartial investigation. The government denied access to the area.

Special Rapporteur Quintana released his final report on 14 March, saying that the government has taken no “clear action” aimed at addressing widespread discrimination and possible crimes against humanity perpetrated against Rohingya.

On 26 March the UN Human Rights Council unanimously adopted a resolution expressing serious concern about the plight of the Rohingya and requesting an independent investigation into recent violence. In a 2 April statement OCHA condemned violence against aid workers in Sittwe.

The UN Secretary-General also urged the government to ensure the safety and security of all humanitarian workers. On 25 April he convened the first meeting of the Partnership Group on Myanmar, which included Burma/Myanmar's Minister of Immigration and Population Affairs. The Secretary-General and member states called upon the government to take “firm action” to curb incitement of violence and to address the issue of citizenship for Rohingyas.

## 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 institutionalized discrimination against the 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 also 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 urge the government of Burma/Myanmar to prioritize the development of a comprehensive plan to engage all ethnic and religious minorities in an inclusive reconciliation process. Remaining sanctions should only be lifted following a demonstrable improvement in the welfare of ethnic and religious minorities.

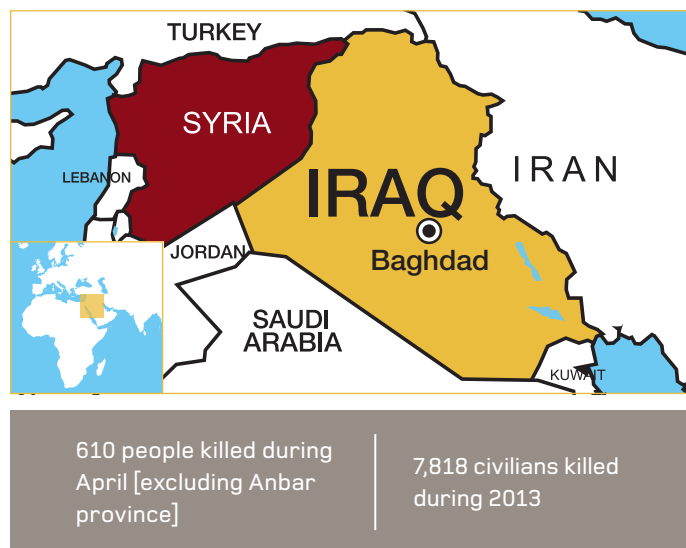
A central component of the government's reform process must include constitutional reform that addresses the needs of ethnic minorities, as well as the development of an independent judiciary as a means of safeguarding human rights and tackling the culture of impunity regarding mass atrocity crimes.

### MORE INFORMATION

- » [Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar](#), 14 March 2014
- » [Situation of human rights in Myanmar](#), Human Rights Council, 26 March 2014
- » [Secretary-General's Remarks at Partnership Group on Myanmar](#), 25 April 2014
- » [GCR2P Populations at Risk: Burma/Myanmar](#)

## 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.



## IRAQ

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

### BACKGROUND

Growing violence and sectarian terrorist attacks killed over 7,818 civilians in Iraq during 2013, the highest death toll since the end of the 2006–2008 civil war. Coordinated attacks, perpetrated largely by Sunni militant groups intent on killing Shia civilians and toppling the government, often consist of bombings of crowded areas in targeted communities. Some Shia militias have carried out retaliatory attacks and religious

minorities have also been the victims of sectarian killings. The UN Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI) reported that 610 civilians were killed during April, excluding deaths in Anbar province.

Widespread fighting between Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and extremist groups, including ISIL, an armed group operating on both sides of the Iraq-Syria border, have increased in Anbar province. On 1 January ISIL fighters seized control of Fallujah and parts of Ramadi. ISF surrounded Fallujah and military efforts to retake the city are ongoing.

The ISF has also been widely accused of committing serious human rights abuses, including unlawful use of force against peaceful protesters, illegal detention and systematic use of torture. There are grave fears for the fate of civilians trapped in Fallujah as ISIL and the ISF battle for control of the city.

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 during December 2012, but the government has characterized it as a terrorist movement aimed at the sectarian and territorial division of the country.

On 30 April the country held its first parliamentary elections since United States troops left in 2011. During the week leading up to the election, ISIL carried out several attacks, including against a rally for a Shiite political party on 25 April, killing at least 33 people.

A series of car bomb attacks on Shia districts in Baghdad killed at least 25 people on 13 May, a Shia religious holiday.

## 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 aggravated 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 posed by 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. Human rights violations are routinely perpetrated by the ISF who often commit abuses in the name of counter-terrorism. A culture of impunity is pervasive.

With heightened ethnic and sectarian tensions, the outcome of recent parliamentary elections threatens to increase political fragmentation and potentially spark further violence.

The civil war in neighboring Syria has exacerbated domestic conflict. 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 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 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 30 May Press Statement, the UNSC welcomed the reasonably peaceful elections.

## NECESSARY ACTION

While confronting the security threat posed by terrorist attacks, the Iraqi government must ensure the protection of civilians and address the underlying sources of conflict between Sunnis, Shias and Kurds in Iraq.

The government and its international supporters, especially the United States, must ensure that the ISF complies with its obligations under international human rights law. Sunni, Shia and Kurdish political leaders must work to address 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 must include increased efforts to restrict the movement of weapons and civilian fighters across the Iraqi-Syrian border.

## MORE INFORMATION

- » [UNAMI Website](#)
- » [UN Casualty Figures for April](#), 1 May 2014
- » [UNAMI Situation Report: Anbar Humanitarian Crisis](#), 24 April 2014
- » [GCR2P Populations at Risk: Iraq](#)



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