

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

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 outside actors militarily contributing to the conflict puts civilians at even greater risk.

BACKGROUND

After more than two and a half years of conflict in Syria at least 110,000 people have been killed. According to the UN, as of 14 November there were over 2.2 million Syrian refugees registered in neighboring countries, with over 5 million people internally displaced. 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. The chemical weapons attack ignited an international debate regarding a possible military intervention in Syria.

In the weeks that followed the United States and Russia led diplomatic efforts to mitigate the future risk of chemical weapons use in Syria. On 14 September Syria acceded to the Chemical Weapons Convention. A joint UN-Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons team began the process of dismantling and destroying Syria's chemical weapons on 6 October.

Meanwhile, the Syrian government continues its aerial bombardment of opposition strongholds and residential areas, in some cases with cluster munitions. On 29 September at least 16 people, mostly students, were killed in a government air strike that hit a secondary school in the rebel-held city of Raqqa. Recent government ground offensives against opposition-held areas have also threatened civilians trapped by intense fighting. With Hezbollah fighters from Lebanon providing direct

military assistance, the government has been able to make significant territorial gains.

Government-allied militias have committed large-scale massacres in several towns over the last two years and continue to commit 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) 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. Human Rights Watch reported that during an offensive launched in Latakia on 4 August armed rebels targeted and killed over 190 civilians. In a conflict that the CoI has described as "overtly sectarian in nature," some armed groups have deliberately desecrated Shia and Christian religious sites. Rebel groups battling for control of towns outside Aleppo have also threatened reprisals against Shia civilians accused of harboring pro-government forces.

While Syria's political opposition formed the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces (National Coalition) during November 2012, it continues to be plagued by divisions. On 25 September eleven Syrian armed groups repudiated the National Coalition. The rising salafist presence amongst the armed opposition has caused friction between rebel groups competing for support and resources, with violent clashes increasing between moderates and extremists.

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." Several states have formally recognized the National Coalition as the legitimate representative of the Syrian people, while 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 Israel has launched several airstrikes on military targets inside

Syria. 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 814,000 Syrian refugees and remains divided along sectarian lines between supporters and opponents of the Assad government. Hezbollah has directly engaged in fighting with Syrian rebels on both sides of the Syria-Lebanon border.

ANALYSIS

Civilians continue to bear the brunt of violence between the government and armed rebels. The government continues to utilize its military resources to retain power at all costs. The 21 August chemical weapons attack on civilians came after more than two years of the Syrian government perpetrating ongoing crimes against humanity and war crimes.

Despite the government's recent military victories, its forces remain locked in an ongoing civil war with armed rebels inside Syria's major cities. Hezbollah's involvement in the conflict has bolstered the 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 are directly threatened by the ongoing civil war.

A growing salafist presence and the increasing fracturing of the armed opposition has compounded the difficulty of convening proposed peace talks ("Geneva II") between all parties to the conflict and the international community.

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. Notwithstanding significant bilateral and multilateral efforts to resolve the crisis, the UN Security Council's (UNSC) division over Syria has 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. An influx of arms will only enable further atrocities and increase civilian deaths.

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 August 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 the UNSC unanimously adopted Resolution 2118, enabling the expeditious destruction of Syria's chemical weapons stockpile and agreeing that in the event of non-compliance the UNSC would consider Chapter VII measures. On 2 October the UNSC adopted 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.

The UN Human Rights Council has adopted eleven resolutions on Syria, with the most recent passed on 24 September. Several have reminded the Syrian authorities of their responsibility to protect civilians.

On 21 August the UN Secretary-General expressed his shock at reports of the chemical weapons attack in Damascus. High Commissioner Pillay condemned the attack as a "flagrant contravention of international law." The UN Special Advisers on the Prevention of Genocide and the Responsibility to Protect echoed this condemnation in a 23 August statement and reminded the Syrian government of its responsibility to protect its population.

The Geneva II peace conference, led by the United States and Russia, was scheduled to take place in June but continues to be postponed. On 22 October foreign ministers from the "Friends of Syria" core group met with opposition representatives to encourage their participation at Geneva II.

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.

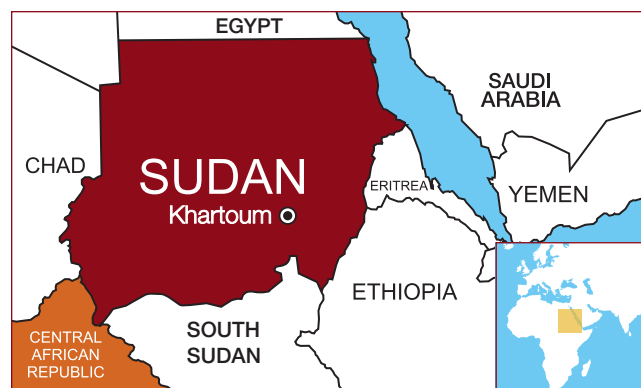
The UNSC needs to take proximate steps to end atrocities in Syria, including imposing an arms embargo and referring the situation to the ICC. Those deemed responsible for chemical weapons use and other mass atrocity crimes in Syria should be thoroughly investigated and the perpetrators, regardless of 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 find a political solution to the conflict. This includes setting a firm date to advance the Geneva II peace talks.

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
- » ["You Can Still See Their Blood,"](#) Human Rights Watch, 11 October 2013
- » [GCR2P Populations at Risk: Syria](#)



SUDAN

Populations in South Kordofan and Blue Nile continue to face mass atrocity crimes perpetrated by the Sudanese Armed Forces and 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 have 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 also documented the SAF's 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 alleged forced recruitment of youths in South Sudanese

refugee camps. The group has shelled civilian areas of Kadugli, South Kordofan, in direct violation of IHL.

The conflict has led to the internal displacement of over 1 million civilians while more than 230,000 have fled to South Sudan and Ethiopia. The government continues to block UN agencies, international humanitarian organizations, independent monitors and the media from access to rebel-held areas in South Kordofan and Blue Nile.

Heavy flooding in South Kordofan and Blue Nile led the SPLM-N to announce a month-long ceasefire starting on 31 August. However, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported civilian casualties resulting from SAF bombings and from fighting between the SAF and SPLM-N throughout September.

Sudan has consistently failed to honor African Union (AU)-brokered agreements and UNSC resolutions calling for a cessation of hostilities.

These conflicts are partly connected to border tensions between Sudan and South Sudan. On 27 September 2012, under the auspices of the AU High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) on Sudan, both governments signed cooperation agreements addressing contentious issues, including oil transit fees, border demarcation and demilitarization. Despite security agreements signed in March, tensions escalated during June when the government of Sudan accused South Sudan's military of providing ongoing support to rebel groups operating within its territory, including the SPLM-N. Sudan and South Sudan have since remilitarized their shared border area.

The AU and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development launched the Ad Hoc Investigative Mechanism on 22 July to examine allegations of both countries supporting rebels operating in the other's territory. The presidents of Sudan and South Sudan held a summit on 3 September in which they agreed to implement the 27 September 2012 cooperation agreements and resolve the status of the disputed Abyei region.

However, the failure of the two governments to reach a final agreement on Abyei, including during another presidential summit on 22 October, led the Ngok Dinka community to hold a referendum on 27 October. The Ngok Dinka voted overwhelmingly to join South Sudan, increasing tensions with the heavily-armed Misseriya, a pro-Sudanese pastoralist community who conduct an annual migration through Abyei. Neither the government of Sudan nor South Sudan endorsed the unilateral referendum.

The security situation in Darfur also remains volatile as a result of inter-communal and state-sponsored violence, which has displaced over 300,000 people so far this year. Violence between ethnic Maalia and Rizeigat in late

August resulted in over 190 fatalities. The government has been restricting the movement of the UN peacekeeping force in Darfur (UNAMID), limiting its ability to respond to crises and uphold its civilian protection mandate. Four UNAMID peacekeepers were killed on 11 and 13 October in North Darfur.

Meanwhile, anti-government protests that started in Wad Madani on 23 September over the removal of fuel subsidies quickly spread to other cities, including Khartoum. Over 170 protesters were killed as the government used deadly force to suppress dissent.

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 international humanitarian law 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.

Recent developments have undermined formal diplomatic progress between Sudan and South Sudan, particularly regarding border demilitarization. The failure to resolve the final status of Abyei endangers the lives of civilians in the area. Heightened tensions between the Ngok Dinka and Misseriya communities as well as between Sudan and South Sudan over the October referendum have increased the risk of a recurrence of significant violence similar to that witnessed in Abyei during May 2011.

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. The extreme and violent response to recent protests increases the general risk to civilians throughout the country.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

Members of the current government, including President Omar al-Bashir, the Defence Minister, Abdel Raheem Muhammad Hussein, and the current governor of South 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 August 2013, [see GCR2P's Timeline of International Response to the Situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States.](#)]

Acting on behalf of the AUHIP, former South African President Thabo Mbeki has facilitated regular talks between the governments of Sudan and South Sudan since July 2011. The UNSC has supported the AU's efforts, including through Resolution 2046, which called upon the parties to implement all provisions of an April 2012 "Roadmap" for Sudan and South Sudan. Mbeki has also brokered agreements between the government of Sudan and the SPLM-N.

On 23 August the UNSC issued a Presidential Statement calling upon Sudan and South Sudan to fully implement the 27 September 2012 cooperation agreements. It also called upon the government of Sudan and the SPLM-N to engage in direct talks, end attacks against civilians and allow unhindered humanitarian access to South Kordofan and Blue Nile.

Following a 23 September meeting, the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) extended the AUHIP's mandate until December 2014. The AU PSC issued a communiqué on 26 October, calling upon the Ngok Dinka community to refrain from holding an unofficial referendum in Abyei. The AU Commission also issued a communiqué criticizing the unilateral referendum on 28 October.

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 by a credible independent body. The UNSC

should mandate the establishment of an international commission of inquiry for South Kordofan and Blue Nile. All perpetrators, regardless of position or affiliation, must be held accountable.

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 stationed 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 Resolution S/RES/2113](#), 30 July 2013
- » [AU PSC Communiqué, PSC/PR/COMM.\(CDIII\)](#), 29 October 2013
- » [GCR2P Populations at Risk: Sudan](#)



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Crimes against humanity and war crimes are being perpetrated by armed groups and military forces operating in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

BACKGROUND

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 has 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 2.6 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the DRC.

Peace negotiations between M23 and the DRC government, led by the International Conference for the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), began on 8 December, but a formal

agreement has not yet been reached. Although M23 surrendered on 5 November 2013, the civilian population still faces risks from other armed groups.

During the conflict M23 committed human rights violations against civilians, including summary executions, gender-based violence and use of child soldiers, actions which may amount to crimes against humanity. M23 also indiscriminately shelled civilian areas in Goma while launching offensives against the FARDC. Sporadic fighting that started in August continued until 4 November as M23 and the government of the DRC alternated between fighting in North Kivu and negotiating with the ICGLR in Uganda.

In a series of clashes that started on 25 October, the FARDC, with assistance from a UNSC-authorized intervention brigade, reclaimed rebel strongholds in North Kivu from M23 forces. On 5 November the government announced that M23 combatants were surrendering, signifying an end to their rebellion. Later that day, M23's political leader issued a statement requesting that M23 troops prepare for "disarmament, demobilization and reintegration on terms to be agreed with the government of Congo."

However, many of the approximately 30 other armed groups operating in the eastern DRC have 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 have utilized insecurity in the east to attack populations with increasing frequency. Several groups have been implicated in targeting specific ethnic groups while perpetrating atrocities.

Patterns of violence perpetrated by these groups, including killing, sexual violence, 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) has reported a significant increase in sexual violence in North Kivu, noting over 705 registered cases in the first six months of the year.

Clashes between the FARDC and the Ituri Patriotic Resistance Front during September and August resulted in the displacement of more than 80,000 people. On 26 October the UN stabilization mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) condemned atrocities perpetrated in Masisi by the Mayi-Mayi Cheka group, which has killed more than 34 civilians in attacks committed in collaboration with another armed group, Raia Mutomboki.

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.

As part of the Framework Agreement for Peace, Security and Cooperation in the DRC (Framework Agreement), the government held a three-week national dialogue during September. While the dialogue produced recommendations for government reform, key figures from the political opposition and representatives of groups perpetrating violence in the east did not participate.

ANALYSIS

Despite ongoing mediation and M23's defeat, the threat posed by ex-rebels and other armed groups remains high. Failure of the ICGLR's mediation process may still result in renewed violence around Goma, threatening the more than 100,000 IDPs residing in nearby camps. Other armed groups in the region continue to target civilians while populations also face a grave risk as rival militias continue to compete for territory and resources.

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 movement of people and resources across its borders. Rising threats from other armed groups and widespread displacement poses an ongoing challenge to the ability of the FARDC and MONUSCO to comprehensively protect civilians in the eastern DRC.

Competition for control of minerals and 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 inter-communal 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. M23 has reportedly placed reintegration into the military on their list of demands during negotiations.

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 September 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 leaders, to the enforcement of travel bans and asset freezes. The group of experts for the DRC briefed the UNSC on 22 July, addressing further allegations of outside support to M23 and FARDC support to the FDLR.

The Regional Oversight Mechanism of the Framework Agreement held a meeting on 23 September on the sidelines of the opening of the UN General Assembly. Participants adopted a communiqué condemning the commission of crimes by "all negative forces" in the DRC and the recent shelling of Rwandan territory.

On 24 September the UN Human Rights Council passed a resolution condemning acts of sexual violence perpetrated in the DRC and encouraging states to provide ongoing support so the government can meet its obligations under international law.

The UNSC visited the DRC between 4 and 7 October to meet with government officials, MONUSCO and civil society in Kinshasa and Goma. During the meetings the UNSC assessed the implementation of reforms that the government committed to under the Framework Agreement and also evaluated the progress of MONUSCO's intervention brigade.

On 4 and 5 November South Africa hosted a joint Southern African Development Community (SADC)-ICGLR summit, which UN Special Envoy to the Great Lakes Region, Mary Robinson, noted was an "important opportunity to build consensus on ending the immediate security crisis and for moving forward with full implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework."

Various world leaders and senior UN officials welcomed the defeat of M23 and called for renewed efforts to defeat other armed groups in the eastern DRC.

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.

NECESSARY ACTION

The government of the DRC 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 government and M23 should continue to pursue a political solution through the ICGLR negotiations in order to avoid any resumption of armed violence.

The FARDC must not permit individuals who have previously committed atrocities to join its forces and should immediately 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.

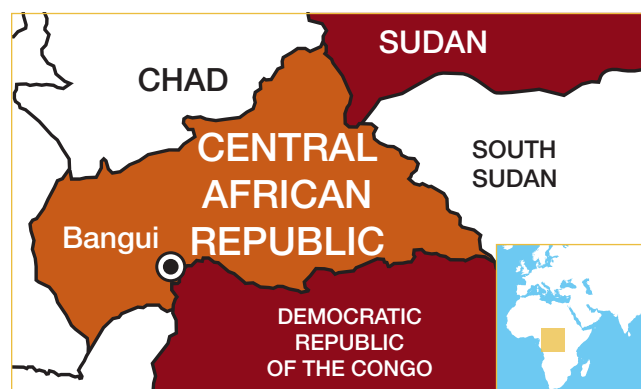
Together with the UN Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, the AU, ICGLR and SADC must ensure that the signatories to the Framework Agreement fulfill their commitments. Signatories must use the momentum from the defeat of M23 to help combat and eliminate other armed groups, particularly the FDLR and Mayi-Mayi militias.

MORE INFORMATION

- » [MONUSCO Website](#)
- » [Human Rights Council Resolution A/HRC/24/L.9](#), 24 September 2013
- » [GCR2P Populations at Risk: DRC](#)

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.



CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Populations in the Central African Republic face an imminent risk of mass atrocity crimes committed by ex-Séléka rebels, local self-defense groups and other unidentified armed groups.

BACKGROUND

Populations in the Central African Republic (CAR) have endured pervasive insecurity for over eleven months. During December 2012 the Séléka alliance launched an armed rebellion against the government of CAR. Despite several agreements brokered by the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Séléka alliance

overthrew President François 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, Djotodia and the NTC have been unable to bring Séléka fighters under central control.

Séléka forces, who are predominantly Muslim, have committed grave human rights abuses against populations throughout the country, including executions, torture, indiscriminate shelling of communities, widespread rape and conscription of child soldiers. They have especially targeted the majority Christian population of CAR. In response, Christian civilians have formed “anti-balaka” (anti-machete) self-defense groups, resulting in retaliatory violence against Muslim communities.

Séléka has fractured since the coup, with some fighters integrating into the new armed forces and others imposing their own rule upon towns outside of Bangui. On 13 September interim President Djotodia ordered the dissolution of the Séléka alliance. Despite this, widespread clashes were reported between ex-Séléka rebels and anti-balaka groups throughout September, October and November.

More than 350 Muslim civilians were reportedly killed in Bossangoa by anti-balaka groups between 6 and 14 September. Ex-Séléka rebels reportedly killed 67 Christians

in the same town between 7 and 21 September. More than 60 people were also killed in fighting in Garga between 7 and 8 October as anti-balaka groups clashed with ex-Séléka rebels. Ex-Séléka elements reportedly targeted and killed civilians who supported the self-defense groups.

On 26 October another anti-balaka group surrounded and attacked the village of Bouar in the western province of Nana-Mambéré, resulting in 40 people killed and over 5,000 displaced. Between 28 October and 1 November ex-Séléka rebels looted and burned over 100 homes in the northwestern villages of Vacap and Yongoro.

OCHA's Emergency Director stated on 29 October that "indescribable atrocities" are being committed against civilians and that violence was "inciting communities against one another." Over 67,000 people have sought refuge in neighboring countries since December 2012, while more than 395,000 people have been internally displaced, including 170,800 in the area of Bossangoa. OCHA estimates that at least 737 people have been killed in violence so far this year.

ANALYSIS

CAR has suffered decades of political instability and humanitarian crisis. Since March 2013 the state has effectively ceased to function. Violence is increasing as armed groups proliferate throughout the country, resulting in widespread human rights violations against civilians. Populations face an imminent risk of mass atrocity crimes as a result of rising sectarian violence.

The NTC lacks the ability to exercise sovereignty over large swaths of CAR and is unable to control ex-Séléka elements. Impunity for grave human rights violations is pervasive, as the NTC lacks the capacity and political will to investigate abuses.

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

In the absence of state security, populations in CAR have few options for protection and have formed numerous self-defense groups. Localized armed conflict between these groups and ex-Séléka factions has become widespread. Christian and Muslim communities have both been targeted for violent reprisals. Armed groups that support former President Bozizé have also reportedly attacked civilians supportive of the NTC.

While the AU has launched an African-led International Support Mission for CAR (MISCA), the mission is not expected to be fully operational before 2014. There are

serious concerns regarding the ability of the force to protect civilians.

The NTC is manifestly unwilling and unable to uphold its Responsibility to Protect. Urgent and immediate action is necessary to protect populations in CAR and avert mass atrocity crimes.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

An International Contact Group was formed for CAR during May and held its third meeting on 8 November in Bangui.

On 1 August the AU launched the transition to MISCA from the pre-existing ECCAS-led peace operation, MICOPAX. MISCA is envisioned to consist of 3,600 peacekeepers. The UNSC adopted Resolution 2121 on 10 October, calling for the swift deployment of MISCA and allowing for the possible transition of the force into a UN-led peacekeeping operation.

At an Extraordinary Summit on 21 October, ECCAS authorized MISCA to employ force to "neutralize, disarm and remove all foreign armed elements" from CAR. The regional body committed to reinforcing MISCA and called for a Chapter VII mandate from the UNSC. A UN technical assistance mission was dispatched during the week of 28 October.

On 27 September the UN Human Rights Council appointed an independent expert to monitor human rights in CAR.

On 1 October the UN Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Adama Dieng, and the UN Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect, Jennifer Welsh, argued that "the international community has a responsibility to assist the State" to protect populations in CAR. On 5 October the UN political mission in CAR (BINUCA) condemned rising inter-communal violence and called upon the NTC to take meaningful steps to address the security situation.

Between 17 and 19 October the directors of OCHA, UNICEF, UNHCR, the World Food Programme, the International Organization for Migration and other agencies visited CAR to assess the humanitarian situation and called for urgent action.

On 1 November France and Rwanda organized an Arria-Formula meeting of members of the UNSC to discuss CAR. Special Adviser Dieng warned that there is a "possibility of a genocide occurring" in CAR if action is not taken.

NECESSARY ACTION

The NTC should adhere to the transitional road-map originally negotiated with ECCAS. Acts of violence against civilians must be condemned by the NTC and perpetrators held accountable.

The UNSC should authorize the transition of MISCA to a UN-led peacekeeping operation. Such a force should be given a Chapter VII mandate to protect civilians, including the ability to demobilize and disarm armed groups, as well as restore security throughout the country. The transition must be undertaken as expeditiously as possible.

Additional support must be provided to BINUCA to ensure it has adequate protection as well as necessary resources to fulfill its expanded mandate, including human rights monitoring and assisting with a political transition. BINUCA should also support peacebuilding efforts between Christian and Muslim communities.

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

MORE INFORMATION:

- » [BINUCA Website](#)
- » [Report of the Secretary-General on CAR S/2013/470](#), 5 August 2013
- » [UNSC Resolution S/Res/2121](#), 10 October 2013
- » [GCR2P Populations at Risk: Central African Republic](#)



BURMA/MYANMAR

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

BACKGROUND

Outbreaks of anti-Muslim violence that first began over a year ago in Burma/Myanmar continue to put minority populations at imminent risk of mass atrocity crimes. On 29 September inter-communal violence broke out between Buddhist and Muslim residents of several villages in Arakan/Rakhine state. After three days of fighting at least 5 people were killed, while 480 people were displaced and 110 homes, mostly belonging to Muslims, were burned down. This follows numerous incidents of violence that began on 20 March. During two days of clashes which engulfed the town of

Meikhtila in the Mandalay region, an estimated 40 people were killed and 12,000 displaced. Local reports described mobs of Buddhist extremists attacking Muslim homes, businesses and mosques.

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 security forces tasked with restoring order committed killings and other abuses themselves. State media published anti-Rohingya accounts of the events, encouraging further persecution. The UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Myanmar, Tomás Ojea Quintana, reported on 23 September 2013 that 140,000 people remained displaced as a result of this violence.

Rohingya Muslims 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." Buddhist monk organizations have called for their deportation and have attempted to block the delivery of humanitarian aid to displaced Rohingya in Arakan/Rakhine state. This persecution has led thousands of Rohingyas to attempt to seek protection in neighboring countries. On 3 November a boat carrying over 70 Rohingya refugees capsized off the coast, with only 8 survivors.

On 29 April the government-appointed Rakhine State Conflicts Investigation Commission released its report on the 2012 violence, calling upon the government to increase support to IDP camps and ensure that the rights of all groups are protected. However, the Commission also referred to the Rohingya as "Bengalis," reinforcing the prejudice that they are ethnic outsiders. Following a visit from 11 to 21 August, Special Rapporteur Quintana 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.

Government security forces have consistently failed to adequately protect Muslims during these 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 massacre of over 30 Muslim students and teachers in Meikhtila despite witnessing the attack. However, in a positive development, on 14 July President Thein Sein announced the disbandment of the Nasaka, a border security force that has previously committed grave abuses against Rohingya.

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. During 2012 the UN recorded violations committed by the government's armed forces (Tatmadaw) 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 credited with introducing extensive democratic reforms, widespread abuses against several of Burma/Myanmar's minorities continue. What began as attacks upon the Rohingya population in Arakan/Rakhine state is now directed at the broader Muslim community. 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 and deadly violence 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.

On 19 June UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay urged the government to halt ongoing human rights violations and discrimination against the Rohingya.

On 1 July Malaysia urged Burma/Myanmar to take stronger action to prevent the persecution of Muslims. On 11 July Indonesia urged the government to address the citizenship status of Rohingya so they can obtain the same legal rights as "the rest of their countrymen."

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Inter-Parliamentary Caucus and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) have condemned violence against Rohingya. The ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights

group said in a 27 August statement that the government of Burma/Myanmar is not doing enough to reduce inter-communal tensions and prevent anti-Muslim violence. The OIC visited Arakan/Rakhine state on 15 November.

In his 19 August report on the "Situation of human rights in Myanmar," the UN Secretary-General raised concern over human rights violations against the Rohingya and the plight of the wider Muslim community. He called upon the government to address the issue of Rohingya citizenship and hold accountable those disseminating hate literature or responsible for deadly violence.

On 5 November UNHCR deplored the loss of life in the Rohingya boat tragedy and said, "it is unacceptable that people are driven by such desperation into life-risking journeys."

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 those who commit abuses, including those who incite 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 Secretary-General on the human rights situation in Myanmar](#), 19 August 2013
- » [Statement of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar](#), 21 August 2013
- » [Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar](#), 23 September 2013
- » [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.



NIGERIA

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

BACKGROUND

More than 2,000 people have died since 2009 in bombings and gun attacks carried out by Boko Haram, an extremist Islamist group that is committed to overthrowing Nigeria's secular government. On 5 August ICC Chief Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda reported that crimes against humanity may have been committed by Boko Haram. Nigerian security forces have also been accused of failing to provide adequate protection to vulnerable populations and of committing human rights violations as they battle Boko Haram.

On 14 May, after April's "Baga massacre," when 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. Additional troops were deployed to deal with the deteriorating security situation. Despite these efforts, Boko Haram continues to launch attacks against civilians. At least 70 people were killed in three separate Boko Haram attacks in Borno state between 31 October and 2 November.

As part of Boko Haram's terrorist campaign, Christians have been singled out for attack and church bombings have become a regular occurrence. For example, at least 28 people were killed on 29 July when deadly explosions hit a predominantly Christian neighborhood in Kano city. Previous attacks have at times triggered violent reprisals against Muslims and resulted in inter-communal violence.

Boko Haram has also targeted Muslims critical of the group's actions or working for the government. The group killed at least 44 worshippers at a mosque in the town of Konduga, Borno state on 11 August. Boko Haram, which considers secular education "un-Islamic," has also increased its attacks on schools. On 29 September Boko Haram militants killed up to 50 students in Gujba, Yobe state in an attack on a college dormitory.

On 15 October Amnesty International reported that at least 950 people suspected of being members of, or linked to, Boko Haram had died in military detention in the first six months of 2013 alone.

On 14 November OCHA reported that 40,000 civilians had fled northern Nigeria into Niger during the state of emergency.

ANALYSIS

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

The government currently lacks the capacity necessary to adequately protect populations in the north from the threat posed by Boko Haram, while corruption and excessive military force undermines efforts to defeat their insurgency.

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 17 October Nigeria was elected to the UNSC for 2014-2015.

During a meeting with President Jonathan on 26 May, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon underlined the importance of protecting civilians and expressed hope for a quick end to the state of emergency. On 30 September the Secretary-General condemned the killing of college students at Gujba and called "for increased efforts to be taken to prevent similar attacks and ensure adequate protection of civilians."

On 5 November the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights strongly condemned “cowardly attacks by Boko Haram,” including a 2 November attack on a wedding convoy in Borno state, which killed at least 30 people.

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. Nigerian authorities should conduct a credible investigation into deaths in military detention.

The AU, Economic Community of West African States and UN, along with states maintaining significant ties to Nigeria, should assist the government as it deals with the threat posed by 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: Authorities Must Investigate Deaths of Boko Haram Suspects in Military Custody,” Amnesty International, 15 October 2013
- » “Nigeria: UN rights office condemns attack on wedding convoy which killed dozens,” Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 5 November 2013
- » GCR2P Populations at Risk: Nigeria



IRAQ

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

BACKGROUND

Despite a relative stabilization of the security situation in Iraq since the end of the country's 2006-2008 civil

war, growing sectarian violence and terrorist attacks against civilians have killed over 7,000 people during 2013. Coordinated attacks continued throughout October, killing 852 civilians. This violence has increasingly taken the form of bombings of crowded civilian areas in targeted communities.

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, a jihadist group linked to al-Qaeda, has claimed responsibility for many of the attacks.

On 27 October at least 10 car bombs killed 55 people in predominantly Shia neighborhoods of Baghdad. This marked the deadliest day of violence since 5 October, when 70 people were killed. Some Shia militias have also carried out extra-judicial reprisal killings.

Following the United States-led invasion in 2003, foreign troops left the country in 2011, transferring power to a Shia-dominated central government under Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki. Deep sectarian 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. An anti-government protest movement began in December 2012, but the government has largely failed to address its demands and has characterized it as a terrorist movement aimed at the sectarian and territorial division of the country.

According to the UN Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI), the Iraqi Security Forces used excessive force in response to initial protests. On 23 April security forces clashed with unarmed demonstrators, killing 45 people. In its 27 June Report on Human Rights in Iraq, UNAMI reported that in numerous instances demonstrators claimed that they suffered extreme abuse by the security forces. In addition, the security forces have subsequently failed to provide adequate security and protect civilians from attacks perpetrated by Sunni militants.

On 29 October Prime Minister Maliki travelled to the United States to meet with President Barack Obama and seek increased military assistance to combat the escalating violence.

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 discontent and 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 the 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.

On 24 July the UNSC extended the mandate of UNAMI until 31 July 2014.

The Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Iraq, Nickolay Mladenov, has called upon Iraqi political, religious and civil leaders, as well as the security services, to work together to end the bloodshed and ensure that all Iraqi citizens are equally protected. On 6 October he urged action to "halt the accelerated surge in violence."

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. The international community should assist the Iraqi government in upholding its Responsibility to Protect.

MORE INFORMATION

- » [UNAMI Website](#)
- » [Report of the UN Secretary-General on the activities of UNAMI, 11 July 2013](#)
- » [GCR2P Populations at Risk: Iraq](#)



PAKISTAN

Religious and ethnic minorities face potential mass atrocity crimes as a result of an organized campaign of sectarian violence in Pakistan.

BACKGROUND

Thousands of civilians from ethnic and religious minority groups have been killed in targeted attacks in Pakistan over the past decade. At least 325 Shias were reportedly killed during 2012 while more than 300 have been killed in attacks during the first half of 2013 alone.

The ethnic Hazara population, the vast majority of whom practice Shia Islam, have endured several particularly brutal attacks this year. On 10 January a double suicide bombing in a Hazara neighborhood of Quetta killed more than 100 people. The city suffered another attack in February, resulting in the death of at least 80 Hazaras.

Minority communities elsewhere in Pakistan have also endured terrorist bombings, extra-judicial killings and other sectarian attacks. At least 57 people were killed on 26 July following two explosions in Parachinar, the largest city of Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas and home to a large Shia population. Christian communities have also faced attacks, including a 22 September suicide bomb attack on a historic church in Peshawar, which killed at least 85 worshippers.

Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ), a Sunni militant group that was banned in Pakistan in 2001 for inciting sectarianism, has been responsible for most of these attacks. LeJ, which has ties to the Pakistani Taliban (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 previously threatened to kill all Shia Hazaras in Quetta if they did not leave Pakistan by the end of 2012. TTP, Pakistan’s largest Sunni extremist group, has also been involved in sectarian violence. Another extremist group, Jandullah, claimed responsibility for the 22 September attack on Christians in Peshawar.

TTP leader Hakimullah Mehsud was killed on 1 November by a drone missile strike. The TTP have threatened violent retaliation, with vulnerable civilians the most likely potential victims.

ANALYSIS

The ongoing persecution of ethnic and religious minorities is evidence of the government’s failure to adequately confront an organized terrorist campaign aimed not just at the Pakistani security establishment, but at vulnerable religious and ethnic communities. The government has taken little action to encourage religious tolerance in society or to rigorously protect minority populations. The response of the international community to sectarian violence in Pakistan has been inadequate.

Pakistan has recently undergone a historic transition from one civilian government to another. The newly-elected government faces myriad challenges. However, it must make upholding its Responsibility to Protect minority populations from a sustained campaign of sectarian violence an urgent priority.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

United Kingdom Prime Minister David Cameron and United States President Barack Obama assured Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif of continued support for Pakistan’s fight against terrorism during bilateral meetings on 30 June and 23 October, respectively.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has 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

The government must conduct formal investigations into sectarian attacks and prosecute those responsible. The government needs to intensify efforts to prevent terrorist attacks and promote religious and ethnic tolerance.

The government must provide adequate protection to communities at risk, especially the Hazara and others that have seen the most sectarian violence.

MORE INFORMATION

- » [“Annual Report 2013,” United States Commission on International Religious Freedom](#), April 2013
- » [“Sectarian violence: Pakistan’s greatest security threat?,” Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre](#), July 2012
- » [“Pakistan: Deter Escalating Attacks on Shia Muslims,” Human Rights Watch](#), 11 November 2013
- » [GCR2P Populations at Risk: Pakistan](#)

ACCOUNTABILITY WATCH

Bangladesh:

During October the International Crimes Tribunal in Bangladesh (ICTB) delivered verdicts regarding crimes committed by senior members of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party against civilians during the country's 1971 war for independence from Pakistan. Salauddin Quader Chowdhury was sentenced to death and Abdul Alim to life in prison. On 3 November the ICTB sentenced in absentia two expatriates, Chowdhury Mueen-Uddin and Ashrafuzzaman Khan, to death by hanging for crimes against humanity.

Ecuador

A judge ordered the arrest of three senior retired army and police officers in the country's first impending crimes against humanity trial. The officers are accused of abducting and torturing members of an armed opposition group in 1985. The charges are based on a report from a truth commission established in 2007 by current President Rafael Correa to investigate crimes allegedly committed by the security forces during the 1980s.

Libya:

On 11 October the ICC Pre-Trial Chamber decided Libyan authorities are "willing and able" to conduct a domestic trial of Abdullah al-Senussi. Senussi's lawyer said he would appeal, claiming the ICC has evidence "that the Libyan justice system is in a state of collapse and that it is incapable of conducting fair trials of any Gaddafi-era officials."

Kenya:

On 12 October an extraordinary summit of the AU passed a resolution stating that no sitting African head of state should appear before the ICC. The summit also requested Kenya write to the UNSC to request under Article 16 of the Rome Statute a deferral of the case of Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta on charges of crimes against humanity.

On 18 October the ICC excused Kenyatta from continuous presence at his trial in order "to accommodate the demanding functions of his office." On 31 October the ICC agreed to delay the trial of President Kenyatta until 5 February 2014. Kenyatta's lawyers had asked for more time in the aftermath of the Westgate mall terrorist attack in Nairobi. The ICC trial of Deputy President William Ruto is ongoing.

On 15 November the UNSC rejected the Article 16 request from the AU to defer the trial of President Kenyatta.

Côte d'Ivoire:

On 30 September 2013 the ICC unsealed a warrant for the arrest of Charles Blé Goudé on charges of committing crimes against humanity during the 2010-2011 post-electoral crisis in Côte d'Ivoire. The court charges that while serving as head of the Youth Patriots group and as Minister of Youth, Blé Goudé helped plan attacks on civilians and recruited individuals who perpetrated murder and sexual violence.



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