

R2P MONITOR

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the Global Centre for the
Responsibility to Protect

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

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

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

CURRENT CRISIS

Mass atrocity crimes are occurring and urgent action is needed.

IMMINENT RISK

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

SERIOUS CONCERN

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

R2P Monitor:

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

Syria {p. 2}	Burma/Myanmar {p. 8}	Nigeria {p. 11}
Sudan {p. 4}	South Sudan {p. 10}	Central Africa/LRA {p. 12}
DR Congo {p. 6}		Iraq {p. 14}
		CAR {p. 15}

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 have also committed war crimes. The increasingly sectarian nature of the civil war puts civilians at even greater risk.

BACKGROUND

After more than two years of conflict in Syria, at least 100,000 people have now been killed. Recent government offensives against opposition-held cities have threatened civilians trapped by intense fighting. With the direct military assistance of Hezbollah fighters from Lebanon, the government was able to retake the strategic city of al-Qusayr after a three-week battle that ended on 5 June. Government forces and Hezbollah began a similar siege of Homs at the end of June.

The UN reported that as of 17 June there were over 1.6 million Syrian refugees registered in neighboring countries, with over 5.1 million people internally displaced.

The Syrian government continues its aerial bombardment of opposition strongholds and residential areas, in some cases with cluster munitions, and has also been accused of using chemical weapons. The Human Rights Council-mandated Commission of Inquiry (CoI) has reported evidence of chemical weapons use, but has so far been unable to identify the perpetrators.

Government-allied militias have committed large-scale massacres in several towns over the last two years. Pro-government forces continue to commit war crimes and gross violations of international humanitarian law (IHL) as a matter of policy. The CoI reported on 4 June that crimes of murder, rape and torture have been perpetrated by government forces and allied militias as part of widespread

or systematic attacks against civilians and constitute crimes against humanity.

Some armed opposition groups have also committed war crimes, albeit on a smaller scale than that of the government, including torture and extrajudicial killings of security forces. They have also been implicated in abuses committed against 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. Armed rebel groups battling for control of towns outside of Aleppo have 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. The growing Salafist presence amongst the armed opposition has also caused friction between rebel groups competing for support and resources. On 9 April the leader of the rebel group Jabhat al-Nusra confirmed the group’s ties to al-Qaeda in Iraq.

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 critical economic, military and political support.

The conflict poses a growing threat to peace and stability throughout the Middle East. Between 4 and 6 May Israel launched several airstrikes on military targets in Syria. Friction between Syria and Turkey also remains high following a number of deadly cross-border incidents. Lebanon remains divided along sectarian lines between supporters and opponents of the Assad government and hosts over 587,000 Syrian refugees. Hezbollah has engaged in fighting with Syrian rebels on both sides of the Syria-Lebanon border and directly intervened in the battle for Qusayr. At least 40 people were killed in Sidon, Lebanon, during the last week of June when soldiers clashed with a radical Sunni group.

On 8 July the UN Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Adama Dieng, expressed concern regarding inflammatory statements by leaders across the Middle East

and North Africa that could "lead to further war crimes and crimes against humanity and fuel tensions between different groups both in Syria and elsewhere in the region."

ANALYSIS

With each side in Syria committed to a military victory, the conflict threatens the lives of countless more civilians. The government continues to utilize Syria's dwindling financial and military resources to retain power at all costs. Cross-border conflict, sectarian violence and increasing refugee flows continue to destabilize the region.

Despite the government's strategic victory at Qusayr, its forces remain locked in an ongoing civil war with armed rebels inside Syria's major cities. Civilians continue to bear the brunt of government reprisals against rebel-held areas.

Although the government has experienced significant defections to the opposition, Alawites still form the core of the command structure of the regime's security apparatus and, along with other minorities, have largely remained supportive. As violence worsens, sectarian divisions have become more pronounced.

Hezbollah's involvement in the conflict has bolstered the government and allowed for significant military advances. Alarm over the shift in the balance of power on the battlefield has influenced several Western governments to consider sending arms to some rebel groups.

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 to find a political solution to the conflict continue. An influx of arms will 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. Some members of the armed opposition also bear responsibility for war crimes.

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 May 2013 see [GCR2P's Timeline of International Response to the Situation in Syria](#).]

On 7 June the UNSC issued a Press Statement urging the government to grant unimpeded humanitarian access to Qusayr and calling upon all parties to protect civilians. In a 10 July Presidential Statement the UNSC expressed concern over the dire impact of the Syrian crisis on Lebanon's stability.

In the absence of coercive measures mandated by the UNSC, several Western and Arab countries have severed diplomatic relations with the Syrian government and imposed sanctions.

The Human Rights Council has adopted ten resolutions on Syria. The 29 May resolution strongly condemned ongoing violence, including massacres of civilians, and called upon the Syrian authorities to uphold their responsibility to protect civilians in Qusayr and elsewhere.

A peace conference led by the United States and Russia was scheduled to take place by the end of June, but has been postponed. On 13 June the United States announced that it would provide some Syrian opposition groups with "direct military aid." The following week, the "Friends of Syria" group, including the United Kingdom, France and Germany, agreed to provide urgent support to opposition groups.

During a 30 June ministerial meeting, the European Union and the Gulf Cooperation Council condemned Hezbollah's involvement in the conflict and reiterated the need to find a political settlement.

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 unimpeded humanitarian access to civilian populations.

The UNSC needs to take immediate steps to end atrocities in Syria. It must impose an arms embargo and authorize targeted sanctions. It should also refer the situation to the ICC for investigation and support the work of the Col.

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 should increase efforts to find a political solution to the conflict.

MORE INFORMATION

- » [UNSC Press Statement](#), 7 June 2013
- » [Report of the independent international commission of inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic A/HRC/23/58](#), 4 June 2013
- » [The deteriorating situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic, and the recent killings in Al-Qusayr, A/HRC/RES/23/1](#), Human Rights Council, 19 June 2013
- » [GCR2P Populations at Risk: Syria](#)



SUDAN

Populations in the Sudanese states of 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 has continued indiscriminate aerial bombardments of populated areas in South Kordofan and Blue Nile and has reportedly used cluster munitions. The SAF and their allied paramilitaries, the Popular Defense Forces (PDF), have also committed extra-judicial killing, forced displacement and sexual violence against civilians. Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have recently documented the SAF using scorched earth tactics, 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 continues to shell 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 222,000 have fled to South Sudan and Ethiopia. The government continues to block UN agencies and international humanitarian groups from access to rebel-held areas in South Kordofan and Blue Nile while also denying independent monitors and the media access. On 23 May Valerie Amos, head of the UN Office for Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), criticized the government of Sudan and the SPLM-N for impeding the delivery of humanitarian aid to civilians.

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

The government of Sudan and the SPLM-N held direct talks on 24 April. Facilitated by the AU High Level Implementation Panel on Sudan (AUHIP), the talks ended on 26 April without agreement. The dialogue aimed to resolve the conflicts in South Kordofan and Blue Nile and to complete the disarmament of the SPLM-N that was mandated under the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA).

Following the talks the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF), an umbrella organization consisting of the SPLM-N and other armed rebel groups, launched a major offensive on 27 April that resulted in the displacement of more than 63,000 civilians.

The conflicts in South Kordofan and Blue Nile are linked to border tensions between Sudan and South Sudan. On 27 September 2012, under the auspices of the AUHIP, both governments signed cooperation agreements addressing contentious issues, including oil transit fees and the status of citizens in the other's territory. They also agreed to demarcate their borders and establish a safe demilitarized border zone (SDBZ) to be monitored by the UN peacekeeping force in Abyei (UNISFA) as part of the Joint Border Verification Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM).

Following mediation by former President of South Africa and current chairperson of the AUHIP, Thabo Mbeki, on 8 and 12 March the two states signed border security agreements, which were predicated upon both withdrawing their security forces from the SDBZ area. Despite these agreements, tensions escalated on 9 June when the government of Sudan ordered a shutdown of South Sudanese oil imports after accusing South Sudan's military of providing ongoing support to the SRF. Sudan and South Sudan have since re-militarized the SDBZ area.

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. An ICC-indicted paramilitary leader, Ali Kosheib, was reportedly involved in attacks on ethnic Salamat communities during

April, resulting in more than 100 civilian deaths. On 26 June more than 40 civilians were killed during inter-communal violence between the Rizeigat and Bani Hussein communities. On 13 July an ambush resulted in the death of seven UN peacekeepers.

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 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.

Recent tensions have undermined diplomatic progress between Sudan and South Sudan, particularly regarding demilitarization of the border. The failure to resolve the final status of Abyei continues to endanger civilians in the area.

Despite the presence of a UN peacekeeping force (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 have heightened the risk of further mass atrocities.

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 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 May 2013, see [GCR2P's Timeline of International Response to the Situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States](#).]

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

On 29 May the UNSC unanimously agreed to increase the size of UNISFA to 5,326 troops and extended the mission's mandate until 30 November 2013. The elevated troop ceiling is intended to provide force protection to JBVMM monitors.

On 5 June the Chief Prosecutor of the ICC urged the UNSC to take immediate action to end impunity in Darfur, noting that Hussein and Haroun were reportedly still perpetrating crimes against civilians.

In a 14 June Press Statement the UNSC condemned an attack on UNISFA that left one peacekeeper dead.

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 also include South Kordofan and Blue Nile and enforce all provisions of Resolution 2046 relating to humanitarian access.

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 under these agreements.

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

Sudan and South Sudan must continue to negotiate outstanding post-secession issues and resolve the status of Abyei. Both governments should stop the illicit flow of weapons to armed groups operating in the other's territory and uphold previous agreements to demilitarize Abyei.

MORE INFORMATION

- » [UNISFA Website](#)
- » [UNAMID Website](#)
- » [UNSC Resolution S/RES/2104, 29 May 2013](#)
- » [GCR2P Populations at Risk: Sudan](#)



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Crimes against humanity 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 900,000 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.

Armed groups that have been operating within the DRC for more than a decade – namely the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) and various local Mai-Mai militias – have been attacking populations in the eastern DRC with increasing frequency.

One such armed group, Raia Mutomboki, launched attacks in early June on a mining town in South Kivu, burning homes, raping civilians and displacing more than 1,400 families. Following clashes between Raia Mutomboki and another Mai-Mai group that displaced more than 3,500 families in North Kivu between 20 and 26 June, the UN stabilization mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) vowed to take “serious action” against the group. During 2012 Raia Mutomboki was also implicated in perpetrating widespread crimes against Kinyarwanda-speaking civilians, including ethnic Hutus and Tutsis, while claiming to protect the local population from the threat posed by the FDLR.

Similar patterns of violence have also been witnessed in North Kivu, Katanga and Oriental Province over the past six months. OCHA reported in April 2013 that various Mai-Mai groups are accused of killing, abducting and forcefully recruiting civilians in Katanga. Between 11 and 15 July at

least 10 civilians were killed and more than 66,000 fled into Uganda after another armed group, the Allied Democratic Forces, attacked the border towns of Kamango and Kikingi.

Armed groups have increased their operations in a security vacuum created by the redeployment of FARDC troops to confront the M23 mutiny. Populations have also endured mass atrocities as a result of hostilities between the FARDC and M23. M23 launched a major offensive during November 2012, occupying Goma until 1 December. More than 140,000 civilians were displaced by the fighting. 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 been reached and subsequent talks have stalled.

M23 split into two rival factions on 27 February, resulting in fighting for control of the group's strongholds and a new wave of civilian displacement. During March an estimated 700 members of one faction fled to Rwanda where they were disarmed and demobilized. On 18 March Bosco Ntaganda, an M23 leader indicted by the ICC for crimes committed in Ituri during a previous conflict, surrendered at the United States' Embassy in Kigali and was transferred to The Hague.

Fighting near Goma resumed on 20 May resulting in one civilian death and thousands displaced. M23 declared a ceasefire on 23 May in advance of a visit to Goma by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and World Bank President Jim Young Kim.

M23 has 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. On 26 June MONUSCO reported that M23 regularly conducts operations against the civilian population, including murders, arbitrary arrests and widespread harassment.

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. OCHA reported on 13 February that FARDC troops threatened civilians in Maniema on the basis of their ethnicity during an assault on Raia Mutomboki and has also received allegations of the FARDC committing crimes against populations in Katanga in reprisal for collaboration with Mai-Mai groups.

ANALYSIS

While the surrender of Ntaganda has been hailed as a victory for international justice, the threat posed by M23 and other armed groups remains high. These groups continue to perpetrate atrocities against civilians, particularly in the eastern DRC where sexual violence is frequently used as a weapon to terrorize local populations. 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.

The UN Joint Human Rights Office in the DRC (UNJHRO) has reported that following FARDC redeployments armed groups have tried to expand their areas of influence, "carrying out violent attacks against civilians and exacerbating interethnic tension." Ethnic Hutus and Tutsis remain at particular risk of targeted killing by Raia Mutomboki and other rebel groups who perceive them as supportive of the FDLR or M23.

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 can exacerbate divisions within the military and potentially put civilians at risk.

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 lost control of several areas to M23 and other rebel groups and has historically been incapable of controlling movement across its borders.

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.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

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

During 2012 the UNSC issued four Press Statements and a Presidential Statement on the crisis in the eastern DRC, condemning the activity of M23 and other armed groups. The UNSC adopted Resolution 2076 on 20 November demanding the immediate withdrawal of M23 from Goma.

The UNSC currently subjects 9 entities and 31 individuals, including several M23 leaders, to the enforcement of travel bans and asset freezes. On 31 December M23 and the FDLR were added to the targeted sanctions list.

On 24 February 2013 11 neighboring countries signed the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the DRC and the Region, designed to provide a comprehensive solution to conflict. The UN, AU, ICGLR and South African

Development Community (SADC) agreed to serve as guarantors. To support implementation, the UN Secretary-General appointed Mary Robinson as Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region.

The UNSC unanimously passed Resolution 2098 on 28 March, updating the mandate of MONUSCO to include an "intervention brigade" authorized to conduct "targeted offensive operations" against armed groups operating in the eastern DRC. The brigade will be composed of 3,069 troops contributed by South Africa, Tanzania and Malawi and is expected to be fully deployed by the end of July.

On 22 May the UN Secretary-General and World Bank President announced a \$1 billion aid package for the DRC in support of the Framework Agreement.

The UNSC will hold a high-level debate on the situation in the DRC and the Great Lakes Region on 25 July.

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 FARDC must not permit individuals who have previously committed atrocities to join its forces and should immediately train newly integrated groups in the protection of civilians, respect for human rights and IHL. The government urgently needs to act on commitments made with the UN on halting sexual violence.

The Human Rights Council, UNSC and other key actors must take action in response to UNJHRO's findings on groups committing ethnically motivated crimes. All perpetrators of mass atrocity crimes in the DRC, including members of the FARDC, need to be held accountable.

MONUSCO should support the government in facilitating local peacebuilding in order to prevent further violence.

The AU, ICGLR and SADC must continue to lead international efforts to halt the operation of armed groups in the eastern DRC. Together with the UN Special Envoy, these organizations must ensure that the signatories to the Framework Agreement fulfill their commitments.

MORE INFORMATION

- » [MONUSCO Website](#)
- » [UNSC Resolution 2098 S/RES/2098](#), 28 March 2013
- » [Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region](#), 24 February 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.



BURMA/MYANMAR

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

BACKGROUND

Anti-Muslim violence has been increasing in Burma/Myanmar since March, putting minority populations at risk of mass atrocity crimes. Inter-communal violence between Buddhists and Muslims engulfed the town of Meikhtila in Mandalay state on 20 March. During two days of clashes an estimated 40 people were killed and 12,000 displaced. The violence triggered clashes in several other villages. Local reports described mobs of Buddhist extremists attacking Muslim homes, businesses and mosques. On 28 May anti-Muslim violence also broke out in Lashio, Shan state. At least 1,400 Muslims were displaced.

Government security forces have failed to adequately protect Muslims during outbreaks of violence. Police failed to intervene to protect victims during a 21 March massacre of over 30 Muslim students and teachers in Meikhtila.

Sporadic attacks against Muslims in Burma/Myanmar have recurred since June and October 2012 when widespread clashes broke out between Arakanese/Rakhine Buddhists and Rohingya Muslims in Arakan/Rakhine state, killing nearly 200 people. Security forces tasked with restoring order are accused of committing human rights violations themselves. On 22 April Human Rights Watch reported that state security forces in some cases “directly supported the assailants, committing killings and other abuses.” State media published anti-Rohingya accounts of the events, encouraging further persecution. On 17 June the

UN Humanitarian Coordinator in Myanmar reported that 140,000 people remain displaced from this violence with little hope for an improvement in their situation.

The Rohingya continue to face discriminatory state policies, including the denial of citizenship and a newly-imposed two-child limit for families. Last June 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 aid to Rohingya IDPs in Arakan/Rakhine state.

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.

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

Anti-Muslim violence in Shan, Mandalay and Arakan/Rakhine states is evidence of a dangerous communal fracture that the government is failing to adequately address. While the government has been credited with introducing extensive democratic reforms, widespread abuses against several of Burma/Myanmar’s minorities continue.

In particular, the government has taken little action towards improving the plight of the Rohingya. The government’s failure to condemn incitement and deadly violence against Rohingya is tacit endorsement of ethnic cleansing, while refusal to grant them citizenship enables ongoing violations of their human 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. The UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights Situation in Myanmar, Tomás Ojea Quintana, said on 16 February that the Tatmadaw's presence in Kachin state "remains beyond the reach of accountability mechanisms." The country's constitution exempts the Tatmadaw from prosecution for any act carried out "in the execution of their respective duties" and grants it autonomy to manage its affairs. 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, 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. In January the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank approved major loans to the government, their first in over 25 years. On 22 April the European Union suspended all sanctions against Burma/Myanmar with the exception of an arms embargo.

In a 25 March statement on the violence in Meikhtila the UN Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Adama Dieng, said there is considerable risk of further violence unless the government implements measures to prevent escalation and protect populations at risk.

On 19 March the UN Human Rights Council adopted a resolution urging the government to ensure accountability for those responsible for violence in Arakan/Rakhine state, facilitate effective humanitarian assistance and end discrimination against Rohingya.

On 1 May Special Rapporteur Quintana welcomed the Rakhine State Conflicts Investigation Commission's recommendations, but expressed concern over its failure to address impunity and investigate the widespread targeting of Muslims. He urged the government to remove discriminatory regulations imposed upon Rohingya and grant them citizenship. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations Inter-Parliamentary Caucus and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation have also condemned discrimination and violence against Rohingya.

On 19 June the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, urged the government to halt ongoing human rights violations and discrimination against the Rohingya, as well as the spread of anti-Muslim sentiment.

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."

NECESSARY ACTION

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

The government must end endemic discrimination against Rohingya, including the denial of citizenship. It must hold accountable all those who incite ethnic and religious hatred and investigate abuses. 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.

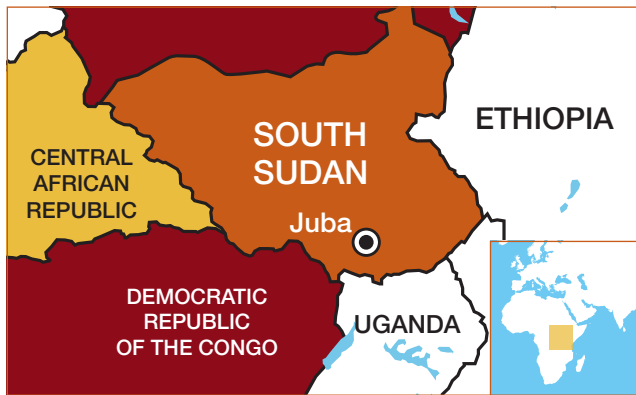
The government must allow unhindered humanitarian access to those affected by violence in Arakan/Rakhine, Kachin and Shan states.

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 developing an independent judiciary as a means of safeguarding human rights and tackling the culture of impunity regarding mass atrocity crimes.

MORE INFORMATION

- » [Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar A/HRC/22/L.20/Rev.1](#), Human Rights Council, 19 March 2013
- » [Myanmar: UN expert urges Government to act on local regulations targeting Rohingya Muslims in Rakhine State](#), OHCHR, 31 May 2013
- » [GCR2P Populations at Risk: Burma/Myanmar](#)



SOUTH SUDAN

Inter-communal violence in South Sudan leaves populations, particularly those in Jonglei state, at imminent risk of mass atrocity crimes.

BACKGROUND

Renewed ethnic violence between rival groups of Lou Nuer, Dinka and Murle in remote Pibor county was reported between 10 and 11 July, threatening the already precarious security situation in Jonglei state. Although at the time of publication a spokesman for the government's armed forces, the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), was unable to provide details on the number of casualties, there were numerous reports of widespread fighting across northern Pibor county involving thousands of armed youth.

The latest violence comes only two days after President Salva Kiir, speaking at celebrations to mark the second anniversary of South Sudan's independence, decried "continuing attacks and senseless killing of innocent civilians" in Pibor county.

The United States Embassy in Juba criticized the SPLA for not intervening to stop the violence, saying that the "lack of action to protect civilians constitutes an egregious abdication of responsibility by the SPLA and the civilian government."

Since August 2012 fighting between the SPLA and forces loyal to David Yau Yau, a rebel leader who is allegedly armed by the government of Sudan, has heightened the ongoing risk of mass atrocity crimes against civilians in Jonglei state. Yau Yau's forces have regularly attacked the military, killing over 100 SPLA soldiers and several UN peacekeepers. Yau Yau has reportedly armed approximately 6,000 youth from his own community, the Murle, and enlisted SPLA deserters.

In late March the SPLA launched a major counter-insurgency operation against Yau Yau's forces in Pibor county. Over 120,000 civilians fled as a result of the fighting. While President Kiir reiterated an amnesty offer to all rebel

groups on 25 April, Yau Yau rejected the proposal. His forces partially occupied Boma between 8 and 19 May. The insurgency has also led to a proliferation of arms in Jonglei state and directly contributed to the threat of renewed inter-communal violence.

Inter-communal violence in Jonglei state has previously followed a cyclical pattern with increases in cattle raids and competition for natural resources during the seasonal migration of populations. Increasingly, women and children have been targeted for abduction and sexual violence. A large-scale attack by armed Lou Nuer youth on Murle communities during December 2011 and retaliatory attacks that continued until March 2012 resulted in at least 888 civilian deaths.

Following the 2011/2012 violence the government undertook measures to prevent renewed inter-communal violence, including launching a disarmament campaign in Jonglei state and facilitating a peace accord between traditional Lou Nuer and Murle leaders. These initiatives were suspended in September 2012.

Recent violence had not previously reached the scale of 2011/2012, although several major attacks have occurred. On 8 February Murle fighters attacked more than 6,000 migrating Lou Nuer pastoralists in Walgak resulting in the death of more than 85 civilians.

ANALYSIS

The rapid escalation of inter-communal violence across Pibor county indicates that the root causes of conflict between the Murle and Lou Nuer have not been adequately addressed. The failure to prosecute perpetrators responsible for past attacks deepens the enmity between communities and perpetuates cycles of violence. Chronic capacity issues have been highlighted by the SPLA's inability to intervene to prevent or halt recent clashes.

Yau Yau continues to provoke ethnic tensions and his insurgency leaves civilians at ongoing risk due to fighting between his forces and the SPLA.

The UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) has stated that it lacks the logistical capacity to protect civilians affected by the Yau Yau insurgency and inter-communal violence. The SPLA and UNMISS' ability to respond will soon be further impeded by the rainy season, which renders most travel routes impassable.

The stability and security of South Sudan continues to be undermined by corruption, weak government and ongoing border tensions with Sudan. Allegations of serious human rights violations by the SPLA demonstrate the need for continued security sector reform.

The government of South Sudan requires ongoing international assistance to ensure security throughout the country and uphold its Responsibility to Protect.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

On 11 July 2013 the UNSC renewed the mandate of UNMISS. The resolution expressed “grave concern at the continuing human rights violations” in Jonglei state and called upon the government of South Sudan to “take greater responsibility for the protection of its civilians.”

The Human Rights Council adopted a resolution on 14 June, expressing concern regarding ongoing inter-communal violence and calling upon the government of South Sudan to implement binding international and regional human rights instruments.

NECESSARY ACTION

The government must immediately deploy adequate SPLA forces to halt widespread inter-communal violence in Pibor county and uphold its Responsibility to Protect. The government must ensure the adequate protection

of civilians while conducting operations against Yau Yau's insurgency. It should facilitate the access of UN and humanitarian agencies to populations affected by the fighting.

The government should implement all provisions of the 2012 peace accord. The government must break the culture of impunity regarding inter-communal violence.

The international community should assist UNMISS and the SPLA in upholding their protection responsibilities by providing riverine and helicopter assets. Donors should fund human rights sensitization programs to enhance the effectiveness and accountability of the SPLA.

MORE INFORMATION

- » [UNMISS Website](#)
- » [Technical assistance and capacity-building for South Sudan in the field of human rights, A/HRC/RES/23/24](#), Human Rights Council, 27 June 2013
- » [UNSC Resolution S/RES/2109](#), 11 July 2013
- » [GCR2P Populations at Risk: South Sudan](#)

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 heightened 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. These attacks exacerbate existing ethnic and religious tensions and increase the risk of widespread inter-communal violence.

As part of Boko Haram's terrorist campaign, Christians have been singled out for attack and church bombings have become a regular occurrence. Over the past year these attacks have sometimes triggered violent reprisals against Muslims. Boko Haram has also targeted Muslims critical of the group's actions or with connection to the government, including clerics and civil servants.

On 14 May President Goodluck Jonathan declared a state of emergency in the northern states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe and deployed troops to deal with the deteriorating security situation. On 17 May the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) stated that Nigerian extremist groups could face crimes against humanity charges if “judged to have committed widespread or systematic attacks against a civilian population – including on grounds such as religion or ethnicity.”

Despite these efforts, Boko Haram has launched several attacks against schools, including a 6 July assault on a boarding school in Yobe state that resulted in the death

of 29 schoolchildren and a teacher. Many of the students were burned to death. On 11 July the government announced that it had reached a tentative ceasefire agreement with Boko Haram.

Inter-communal conflict also continues. According to OHCHR, between 1999 and 2010 more than 13,500 Nigerians were killed in inter-communal violence, while the Council on Foreign Relations estimates that since May 2011 more than 2,532 people have been killed in inter-communal violence as compared to 1,942 killed by Boko Haram. Clashes between Muslim and Christian communities in Plateau and Taraba states have resulted in more than 170 deaths so far this year.

ANALYSIS

The violence in Nigeria stems from a number of sources including poverty, corruption and the manipulation of religious and ethnic identities to serve political and economic interests. Boko Haram has exploited these tensions. While Boko Haram uses terrorism as a tactic, the resulting inter-communal violence means the group's threat should be understood through the lens of the Responsibility to Protect.

Boko Haram is linked with transnational armed Islamist groups and has been viewed internationally as part of the "war on terror." As such, the effort to militarily defeat Boko Haram has elicited a stronger response from the international community and the Nigerian government than the need to address the root causes of persistent ethnic and sectarian conflict.

As fighting escalates between the security forces and Boko Haram, the indiscriminate use of force has heightened the risk of mass atrocity crimes perpetrated against civilians. Moreover, the government currently lacks the material resources necessary to adequately protect populations from the scale of the combined threat posed by terrorist attacks and inter-communal violence.

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

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

On 26 November 2012 the ICC reported that the Prosecutor has "determined that there is a reasonable basis to believe that crimes against humanity have been committed" by Boko Haram, but it has decided to leave prosecutions in the hands of the Nigerian authorities.

The UNSC last issued a Press Statement on Nigeria during January 2012, focusing on terrorist attacks by Boko Haram. 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.

NECESSARY ACTION

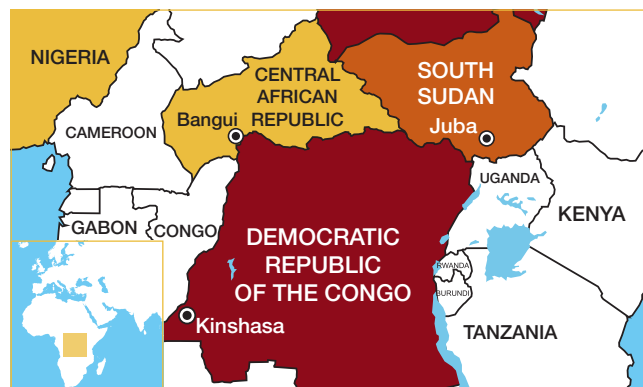
Security forces deployed to the middle-belt and north under the state of emergency must protect vulnerable communities in a manner that is consistent with international human rights standards. With international assistance, the government should advance security sector reform to ensure that the army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

Those who incite or perpetrate inter-communal violence must be held accountable.

The AU, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), UN and states with significant ties to Nigeria, should assist the government as it deals with the threat posed by Boko Haram while urging authorities to address the underlying causes of inter-communal violence and strengthen the rule of law.

MORE INFORMATION

- » [Report on Preliminary Examination Activities 2012](#), International Criminal Court, November 2012
- » ["Spiraling Violence: Boko Haram Attacks and Security Forces Abuses in Nigeria,"](#) Human Rights Watch, 11 October 2012
- » [GCR2P Populations at Risk: Nigeria](#)



CENTRAL AFRICA

The Lord's Resistance Army

Populations in the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo remain at risk of attack by the Lord's Resistance Army, which has perpetrated crimes against humanity.

BACKGROUND

Started by Joseph Kony in northern Uganda during 1987 as a religiously-inspired militia group, the Lord's Resistance

Army (LRA) has perpetrated crimes against humanity across central Africa. The UN Secretary-General released a report on 20 May asserting that between 1987 and 2012 the LRA was “responsible for more than 100,000 deaths, that from 60,000 to 100,000 children are believed to have been abducted by the rebel group and that 2.5 million civilians have been displaced as a result of its incursions.”

No attacks have been reported in Uganda since 2006 or in South Sudan since 2011, but the group remains an active threat to civilians in the DRC and Central African Republic (CAR). The organization The Resolve has utilized satellite imagery to demonstrate that the LRA established camps within the Kafia Kingi enclave in Sudan with Sudanese government support from 2009 until March 2013.

OCHA reported that between 1 January and 31 March 2013 the LRA carried out 66 attacks, resulting in 30 deaths and 87 abductions. According to OCHA, 30 of these attacks occurred in the DRC during March, the largest spike in LRA activity since January 2012. LRA rebels attacked two villages in CAR on 13 June, killing at least 6 civilians and wounding 10 others. After being repelled by a village self-defense group, the LRA returned and killed an additional 6 civilians, mutilating their bodies post-mortem.

ANALYSIS

Although its numbers are estimated at fewer than 300 combatants, the LRA remains a serious concern for populations as it operates across remote regions that lack a significant presence of security personnel. The lack of early warning capabilities undermines attempts to protect civilians in such a vast region since the LRA can attack and flee before local authorities respond.

CAR and the DRC are burdened by other internal conflicts and protecting civilians from the LRA is often a low priority. The recent coup in CAR resulted in several actors, including the United States, Uganda and the AU, suspending their anti-LRA activities in that country. This leaves populations in CAR at greater risk of attack by the LRA and may allow the group to widen its operations.

The cross-border movement of the LRA has hampered attempts to halt its activity. The governments of Uganda and the DRC have failed to form agreements for the movement of troops across borders in pursuit of the LRA in the past, allowing combatants to maintain safe havens within the DRC.

The governments of LRA-affected countries are struggling to uphold their Responsibility to Protect and require ongoing international assistance.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

Over the past two years there has been unprecedented international commitment to defeating the LRA. However,

the UN has a limited number of peacekeepers from MONUSCO and UNMISS stationed in LRA-affected areas. MONUSCO has previously enticed some LRA fighters to leave the group through its DDRRR program and announced on 23 May that it has been enhancing this program via new “return home” messages from helicopters.

During February 2012 the United States deployed 100 troops to provide intelligence support to forces pursuing the LRA. On 3 April 2013 the United States expanded its Rewards for Justice program to include a \$5 million reward for the apprehension of Kony and other LRA leaders.

The AU-led Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the LRA (RCI-LRA) launched its operational phase during March 2012. Since then, governments from all four LRA-affected countries have contributed troops towards the initiative's Regional Task Force (RTF).

The UNSC issued Presidential Statements on 29 June and 19 December 2012 and 29 May 2013 supporting the UN's Regional Strategy for the LRA and emphasizing the “primary responsibility of States in LRA-affected regions to protect civilians.” The 29 May statement also urged greater regional coordination to halt the rebellion in CAR and reinstate counter-LRA initiatives.

NECESSARY ACTION

The AU needs to ensure that troops deployed under the RTF receive training in mass atrocity prevention and IHL. The UN and AU need to ensure that the UN Regional Strategy is fully implemented and heed the recommendations in the December 2012 joint civil society report, “Getting Back on Track: Implementing the UN Regional Strategy on the Lord's Resistance Army.” This is of particular importance with regard to the protection of civilians, the expansion of DDRRR efforts and the development of stronger institutions for the rule of law and human rights in LRA-affected countries.

The UN, AU and donors should ensure that all elements of the RCI-LRA are adequately resourced in order to fulfill their mandate. Anti-LRA initiatives in CAR need to be reinstated as soon as possible. Sudan must cease support for the LRA and work with the AU to apprehend members of the group.

MORE INFORMATION

- » [ICC Situation Page: LRA](#)
- » [LRA Crisis Tracker](#)
- » [“Getting Back on Track: Implementing the UN Regional Strategy on the Lord's Resistance Army,”](#) 5 December 2012
- » [UNSC Presidential Statement](#), 29 May 2013
- » [GCR2P Populations at Risk: Central Africa \(LRA\)](#)



IRAQ

Increasing sectarian violence leaves civilians at heightened risk of mass atrocities.

BACKGROUND

Since the end of Iraq's 2006–2008 civil war there has been a decline in violence and a relative stabilization of the security situation. However, growing sectarian violence between Sunnis and Shias has resulted in more than 2,000 deaths since April. This violence has increasingly taken the form of car bomb attacks or suicide bombings in crowded areas, with various political forces inciting acts of retribution.

According to the UN Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI) 761 Iraqis were killed and another 1,771 wounded during June. In Baghdad alone 258 civilians were killed and 692 injured. The deadliest attacks appear to be perpetrated by Sunni militant groups, including al-Qaeda, intent on killing Shia civilians and toppling the Iraqi government. Shia militias have also carried out extra-judicial 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 persecution and exclusion from the political process, with "de-Baathification" being used as a tool for the marginalization of Sunnis.

A Sunni protest movement, which began in December 2012, has turned increasingly violent as the government failed to respond appropriately to its demands. Some Sunnis have also been mobilized by the dynamics of the conflict in neighboring Syria, where Sunnis dominate anti-government rebel groups.

On 23 April security forces stormed a Sunni protest camp, triggering clashes that killed nearly 50 people. In its 27 June Report on Human Rights in Iraq, UNAMI reported that in numerous instances, demonstrators claimed that they had suffered extreme abuse by the security forces.

On 3 July the UN Special Representative for the Secretary-General in Iraq, Martin Kobler, urged Iraqi authorities "to do their utmost and take all necessary measures to protect the people of Iraq from more bloodshed."

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 cleavage between Sunni and Shia imperils not only the stability of the government, but the lives of countless civilians who fear a possible return to sectarian civil war.

The civil war in neighboring Syria has greatly 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 Assad's government and its Iranian backers. Cultural identities and trans-national loyalties are being manipulated by various political forces and contribute to the government's inability to resolve the security crisis.

The Iraqi government is struggling to uphold its Responsibility to Protect. While confronting the security threat posed by terrorist attacks against civilian populations, it also needs to urgently address the underlying sources of conflict between Sunnis, Shias and Kurds in Iraq.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

On 30 April UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called upon Iraqi security forces to exercise restraint in maintaining law and order. On 11 June he voiced concern over the increasing violence and called upon all parties to redouble efforts to support reconciliation and end sectarian violence.

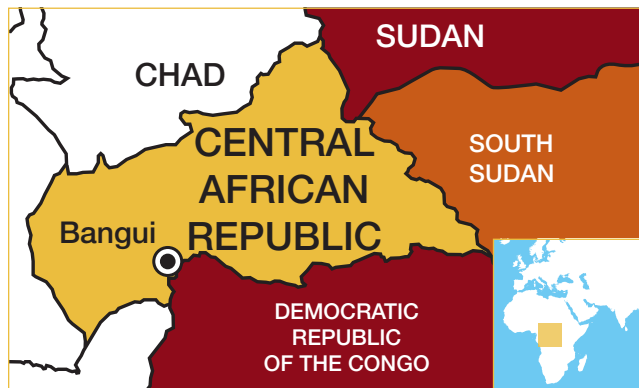
NECESSARY ACTION

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.

The government of Iraq and its international donors and supporters must ensure that security forces comply with obligations under international human rights law. The international community should assist the Iraqi government in upholding its Responsibility to Protect.

MORE INFORMATION

- » "How Baghdad Fuels Iraq's Sectarian Fire," Human Rights Watch, 15 May 2013
- » "Iraq's human rights progress in question as violence takes its toll," OHCHR, 27 June 2013
- » GCR2P Populations at Risk: Iraq



CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Populations in the Central African Republic are facing a heightened risk of mass atrocities perpetrated by armed factions of the Séléka alliance.

BACKGROUND

During December 2012 a coalition of four armed rebel groups, the Séléka alliance, launched an offensive against the government of the Central African Republic (CAR). Following Séléka's occupation of several towns, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) facilitated peace talks between the rebels and the government, resulting in the signing the "Libreville Agreements." The agreements called for a ceasefire, the inclusion of the opposition in a transitional government and a timeline for legislative elections.

Despite these agreements, the Séléka alliance resumed hostilities and overthrew President Francois Bozize on 24 March. Séléka leader Michel Djotodia proclaimed himself President of CAR and on 13 April established a National Transitional Council (NTC). Djotodia, however, has been unable to establish law and order across the country or bring Séléka fighters under centralized control.

The UN Secretary-General's Special Representative to CAR, Margeret Vogt, informed the UNSC that CAR has a "total disregard for international law as elements of Séléka have turned their vengeance against the population." Séléka rebels have targeted civilians, committing killings, rape, torture, arbitrary arrest and recruitment of child soldiers. According to Human Rights Watch, Séléka have

intentionally destroyed 34 villages since February. An estimated 150 civilians have been killed by Séléka forces since the coup in March. Over 60,000 people have sought refuge in neighboring countries while more than 206,000 people have been internally displaced since December 2012.

Violence against civilians has reportedly taken on a religious dimension with Christian communities bearing the brunt of attacks. Séléka, originating from the north, is disproportionately comprised of fighters from the minority Muslim community. According to the UN Secretary-General's May report to the UNSC, Séléka elements have been "targeting non-Muslim citizens" while pillaging neighborhoods in Bangui. The report also indicates that some CAR Christians, including those outside the country, have used social media to incite the population to "systematically retaliate against any and all Muslims."

ANALYSIS

The recent coup is the result of a prolonged period of political instability and sustained underdevelopment. The security situation in CAR remains volatile due to the collapse of credible governance and the inability of the Séléka leadership to control their own forces. Recent fractures within the Séléka alliance threaten to further destabilize the country, leaving populations at heightened risk.

As Séléka forces continue to commit crimes against the population, civilians are increasingly resorting to self-defense. The targeting of non-Muslim citizens has fueled religious tensions and is contributing to retaliatory violence.

The interim authorities need international assistance in order to stabilize the country and uphold their Responsibility to Protect.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

The UN established the Integrated Peacebuilding Office in CAR (BINUCA) in 2010. BINUCA's mandate includes implementation of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) program, reform of the security sector and promotion of rule of law. BINUCA is also tasked with strengthening national capacities for the protection of human rights.

On 25 March the AU condemned the overthrow of the government and suspended CAR's membership. The AU also imposed sanctions upon the Séléka leadership including travel bans and asset freezes.

ECCAS has a pre-existing regional peace operation in CAR (MICOPAX). Following the coup, ECCAS recommended the deployment of a regional peacekeeping mission and pledged to increase MICOPAX to 2000 troops. On 17 June the AU Peace and Security Council released a Communiqué

expressing support for the establishment of an African-led International Support Mission for CAR (AFISM-CAR) to supplement MICOPAX and requested that ECCAS and other international partners submit a detailed “concept of operations” report within 30 days.

An International Contact Group was formed for CAR and most recently met on 8 July.

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, announced on 27 May that she would be sending a fact-finding mission to CAR. The Human Rights Council adopted a resolution on 13 June regarding technical assistance to CAR in order to uphold its human rights commitments.

NECESSARY ACTION

The government must condemn acts of violence against civilians and hold perpetrators accountable. The Séléka leadership and NTC should adhere to the transitional roadmap and reaffirm commitment to the Libreville Agreements of 11 January 2013.

ECCAS, troop contributing countries and donors should submit proposals in support of the AU decision to deploy the AFISM-CAR peacekeeping mission to stabilize the country and protect civilians.

The international community must prioritize a comprehensive DDR and security sector reform program for Séléka rebels. BINUCA needs to immediately deploy human rights monitors outside Bangui to report on violations. The UNSC should adopt targeted sanctions against those responsible for gross human rights violations.

MORE INFORMATION:

- » [BINUCA Website](#)
- » [Technical assistance to the Central African Republic in the field of human rights, A/HRC/RES/23/18](#), Human Rights Council, 27 June 2013
- » [GCR2P Populations at Risk: Central African Republic](#)

ACCOUNTABILITY WATCH

Cambodia:

On 7 June Cambodia's National Assembly approved a bill that makes it a crime to deny that genocide occurred under the Khmer Rouge. If the bill is passed, individuals denying that mass atrocity crimes were committed by the Khmer Rouge could face imprisonment. The bill has been criticized for politicizing the country's history in advance of an upcoming election.

Senegal:

On 2 July Hissène Habré, the President of Chad 1982-1990, was charged with crimes against humanity and war crimes by the Extraordinary African Chambers. Habré has lived in Senegal for more than two decades despite being sentenced in absentia for responsibility for crimes committed by his government.



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