

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.

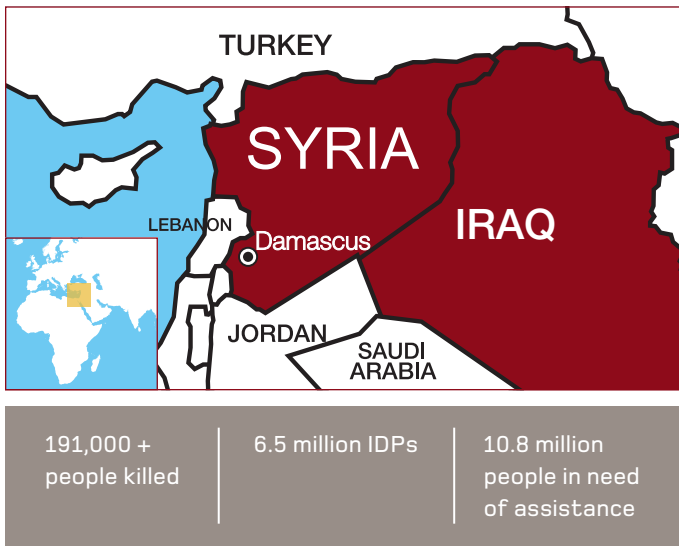
Syria {p. 2}
Iraq {p. 4}
CAR {p. 6}
Sudan {p. 8}
Nigeria {p. 9}

South Sudan {p. 11}

DR Congo {p. 13}
Burma/Myanmar {p. 14}

CURRENT CRISIS

Mass atrocity crimes are occurring and urgent action is needed.



SYRIA

The ongoing civil war in Syria leaves populations facing mass atrocity crimes committed by state security forces and affiliated militias. Some armed opposition groups, including the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, are also committing war crimes and crimes against humanity.

BACKGROUND

After more than three years of conflict in Syria over 191,000 people have been killed. There are over 3 million Syrian refugees in neighboring countries and over 6.5 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) as a result of the conflict. Ongoing fighting has left at least 10.8 million Syrians in need of humanitarian assistance, 4.7 million of whom remain in inaccessible areas.

On 30 July the UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Valerie Amos, said that attacks on civilians continue “in flagrant violation of the most basic principles of international humanitarian and human rights law.” The UN Human Rights Council-mandated Commission of Inquiry (CoI) reported on 13 August that as fierce fighting between government forces and non-state armed groups continues, the “risks of the conflict spreading further are palpable.”

The UN has reported that all parties to the conflict have laid sieges and impeded humanitarian access. Following the 14 July adoption of UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 2165, authorizing cross-border humanitarian aid, the first UN convoy crossed into Syria from Turkey on 24 July, delivering assistance to 26,000 people in Aleppo and Idlib governorates. On 5 August the World Food Programme reported that improved access to affected civilians had allowed for “significant progress” in food deliveries, reaching over 300,000 people in besieged areas. On

28 August the Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Kyung-wha Kang, reported that despite improved access, the overall plight of the Syrian people has worsened.

The government continues its bombardment of opposition-held residential areas. A 30 July Human Rights Watch report documented over 650 new damage sites “consistent with barrel bomb impacts on neighborhoods of the city of Aleppo held by non-state armed groups.” These attacks directly contravene UNSC Resolution 2139 of 22 February, which demanded a halt to the use of indiscriminate weapons in populated areas.

A UN investigation confirmed that on 21 August 2013 a large-scale sarin attack, delivered by rockets, hit several areas of Ghouta, Damascus, killing an estimated 1,400 people. Between 6 October 2013 and 23 June 2014 a joint UN-Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) mission undertook the process of dismantling and destroying Syria’s chemical weapons. On 10 September an OPCW fact-finding mission concluded that chlorine gas was used on 17 April in attacks on Kfar Zeita, a village in Hama Province.

Government-allied militias have committed large-scale massacres and perpetrated war crimes and gross violations of international humanitarian law (IHL) as a matter of state policy. The CoI has reported that pro-government forces have conducted “widespread attacks on the civilian population, committing murder, torture, rape and enforced disappearances as crimes against humanity.” Some opposition groups have also committed mass atrocity crimes, violated IHL and targeted religious minorities for attack. On 28 August al-Nusra Front attacked and held hostage more than 100 peacekeepers from the UN Disarmament Observer Force, which operates in the Golan Heights.

The armed opposition in Syria has become increasingly fractured, causing friction between groups competing for support and resources, with widespread fighting between extremists and more moderate rebel militias. In particular, the “Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant” (ISIL), an extremist armed group operating on both sides of the Syria-Iraq border, has made significant advances. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported that ISIL executed 700 members of the al-Sheitaat tribe in Syria, most of them civilians, during the first two weeks of August. The CoI reported on 13 August that ISIL has committed crimes against humanity.

ISIL now reportedly controls one-third of Syria’s territory and its rapid military advance in Iraq has strengthened its overall position. On 24 August ISIL forces seized Tabqa airbase in Raqqqa province from Syrian government forces following intense fighting. ISIL reportedly executed an estimated 250 Syrian government soldiers after overrunning the airbase.

International actors continue to vie for influence in shaping the outcome of the conflict. Saudi Arabia and Qatar are providing arms to some rebel groups. Meanwhile, Russia and Iran continue to provide the Syrian government with crucial economic, military and political support. On 10 September United States President Barack Obama vowed to "destroy" ISIL, including through possible air strikes against their forces in Syria.

The conflict poses a growing threat to stability throughout the Middle East. Lebanon, which hosts nearly 1.2 million Syrian refugees, has seen sporadic clashes between supporters and opponents of the Assad government. Suicide bombings have killed dozens of people during 2014. Hezbollah has directly engaged in fighting against Syrian rebels on both sides of the Syria-Lebanon border and has vowed to remain militarily active inside Syria.

Attempts at international diplomatic negotiations have stalled. The "Geneva II" peace conference, aimed at ending the violence in Syria, finished on 15 February with no tangible political progress.

ANALYSIS

With each side in Syria committed to an outright military victory, the conflict imperils the lives of countless civilians who continue to be directly threatened by the ongoing civil war.

The government continues to utilize its military resources to retain power at all costs and perpetrate ongoing crimes against humanity and war crimes. With superior capabilities and external assistance, the Syrian government has been able to make significant military gains in several provinces during 2014.

The fracturing and radicalization of the opposition has strengthened the position of the government and compounded the difficulty of achieving a negotiated political settlement. ISIL and several other armed extremist groups pose a direct threat to civilians, especially those from minority religious communities.

External political influence upon the Syrian government via the UN and regional actors remains weak. Sanctions have had limited success as Syria's few remaining allies continue to provide crucial economic insulation. Long-standing divisions within the UNSC over Syria have allowed the situation to deteriorate to the point where few options for a peaceful political solution exist. Nevertheless, it remains imperative that diplomatic efforts be reinvigorated.

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

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

Following the outbreak of violence during March 2011, the international community responded by censuring the regime for its widespread violations of human rights. [For responses prior to July 2014, see [GCR2P's Timeline of International Response to the Situation in Syria](#).]

Between October 2011 and July 2012 Russia and China vetoed three UNSC resolutions aimed at holding the Syrian government accountable for mass atrocity crimes. On 22 May 2014 Russia and China vetoed a fourth resolution that would have referred the situation in Syria to the ICC for investigation. However, since September 2013 the UNSC has also passed three resolutions on Syria – Resolution 2118, regarding the destruction of chemical weapons, and Resolutions 2139 and 2165, demanding increased humanitarian access. Resolutions 2139 and 2165 both reaffirmed the Syrian government's primary responsibility to protect the population.

On 15 August the UNSC adopted Resolution 2170 on threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts. The resolution condemned "gross, systematic and widespread abuses" of human rights by ISIL and al-Qaeda affiliated groups operating in Syria and Iraq, placing six individuals affiliated with the groups on its al-Qaeda sanctions list.

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

The UN-League of Arab States Special Representative, Lakhdar Brahimi, resigned on 31 May, citing limited prospects for a political settlement to the conflict. On 11 July the UN Secretary-General announced Staffan de Mistura as the new UN Special Envoy to Syria.

NECESSARY ACTION

Syrian government forces and armed opposition groups must halt the commission of mass atrocity crimes and adhere to IHL. All sides must facilitate immediate and unimpeded humanitarian access to civilian populations trapped or displaced by fighting, in keeping with UNSC Resolutions 2139 and 2165.

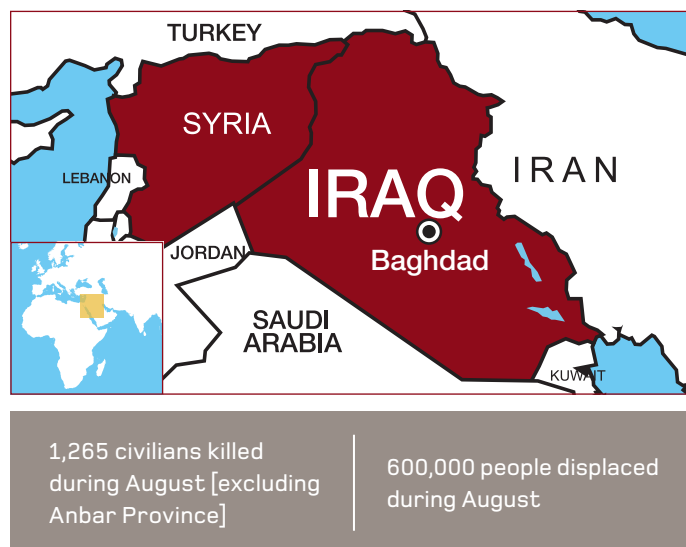
The UNSC needs to take proximate steps to end atrocities in Syria, including imposing an arms embargo and referring the situation to the ICC. Those deemed responsible for mass atrocity crimes in Syria should be thoroughly investigated and the perpetrators, regardless of affiliation, brought to justice.

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

The international community must intensify efforts towards finding a political solution to the conflict and increasing humanitarian assistance to populations trapped or displaced by the civil war.

MORE INFORMATION

- » [Statement by UN Emergency Relief Coordinator to the UNSC](#), 30 July 2014
- » [Syria: Barrage of Barrel Bombs](#), Human Rights Watch, 30 July 2014
- » [Report of the Col A/HRC/27/60](#), 13 August 2014
- » [UNSC Resolution S/Res/2170](#), 15 August 2014
- » [GCR2P Populations at Risk: Syria](#)



IRAQ

The extremist armed group the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant is committing mass atrocities against ethnic and religious minorities in Iraq. As the Iraqi Security Forces and Kurdish Peshmerga fighters confront ISIL, civilians remain at risk of further mass atrocity crimes.

BACKGROUND

The security situation in Iraq has dramatically deteriorated, particularly in Nineveh province and the Kurdish semi-autonomous region, as a result of ongoing attacks by ISIL, which operates on both sides of the Iraq-Syria border and has declared a caliphate spanning both countries. ISIL and several associated armed groups have engaged in widespread fighting with the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), causing civilian casualties and widespread displacement. The UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) reported that 1,265 civilians were killed during August, excluding deaths in Anbar province, and that over 5,576 civilians were killed in the first six months of 2014. With over 600,000 people displaced during August, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs designated Iraq a "Level 3" humanitarian emergency.

On 3 August ISIL seized the northern town of Sinjar, mostly inhabited by the minority Yazidi religious community, threatening death to those who refused conversion to Islam. During the following ten days ISIL fighters reportedly killed at least 500 Yazidis and abducted 1,500 women and girls. Of the more than 200,000 Yazidis who fled, an estimated 50,000 took refuge on

Mount Sinjar. Despite military efforts by Kurdish Peshmerga fighters to protect them, Yazidi civilians required urgent humanitarian assistance and faced possible extermination if they returned to their homes. On 15 August ISIL killed 80 Yazidis in the northern village of Cotcho.

Following a request from the Iraqi government, on 8 August the United States began airstrikes against ISIL positions "to prevent a potential act of genocide," according to President Barack Obama. On 12 August a group of UN experts warned that Yazidis face "imminent danger of massacre" by ISIL and called upon the international community to employ all possible measures to "avoid a mass atrocity and potential genocide within days or hours." Although it was reported on 14 August that airstrikes in support of Peshmerga forces had succeeded in breaking the siege of Mount Sinjar, the situation in northern Iraq remains perilous. On 16 August the United States widened its air campaign against ISIL targets.

On 31 August Iraqi forces and Kurdish Peshmerga, with the assistance of US airstrikes, broke the ISIL siege of the town of Amerli, where approximately 15,000 ethnic Shia Turkmen civilians had been besieged for more than two months. The UN Special Representative for Iraq had warned on 23 August that the situation in Amerli demanded immediate action to prevent possible massacres.

ISIL continues to attack ethnic and religious minorities, including Christians, Shabak and Turkomen throughout western and northern Iraq. On 10 June ISIL forces overran Mosul, Iraq's second-largest city, seizing control of government buildings and a large amount of military equipment. UNAMI verified a massacre of 670 Shia prisoners by ISIL in Mosul on 10 June. ISIL and allied militias captured several more towns as their forces advanced towards Baghdad.

On 25 August UN High Commission for Human Rights Navi Pillay stated that civilians in Iraq were suffering horrific human rights violations at the hands of ISIL, including "systematic and intentional killings" and "widespread ethnic and religious cleansing," amounting to war crimes and crimes against humanity. ISIL violations include targeted killings, forced conversions, abductions, trafficking, slavery, sexual abuse and destruction of places of religious and cultural significance.

The ISF has also been accused of summary executions or extrajudicial killings, possibly amounting to war crimes, as well as the unlawful use of force against peaceful protesters, illegal detention and systematic use of torture. On 27 May Human Rights Watch reported that the ISF had dropped barrel bombs on residential neighborhoods of Fallujah, Anbar province, during its attempt to retake parts of the city seized by ISIL. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported on 6 June that violence in Anbar has displaced nearly 500,000 civilians since January. Large numbers of civilians remain trapped in Fallujah by intense fighting between the ISF and ISIL.

Prior to the recent military offensive by ISIL, growing armed violence and sectarian terrorist attacks killed over 7,818 civilians in Iraq during 2013, the highest death toll since the end of the 2006-2008 civil war. Coordinated attacks, perpetrated largely by Sunni militant groups intent on killing Shia civilians and toppling the government, often consist of bombings of crowded areas in targeted communities. Some Shia militias have carried out retaliatory attacks and religious minorities have also been victims of sectarian killings. On 22 August a Shia militia opened fire inside a Sunni mosque in Diyala province, killing at least 70 people. On 25 August a suicide bomber attacked Shia worshippers in eastern Baghdad, killing 11.

On 30 April Iraq held its first parliamentary elections since United States occupation troops left in 2011. Iraq's Parliament selected Fouad Massoum as the country's new president on 24 July. President Massoum nominated Haider al-Abadi to replace incumbent Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki on 12 August. Although Maliki initially refused to form an inclusive government or step down despite the acute political and military crisis, he announced his resignation on 14 August.

ANALYSIS

The rising threat posed by ISIL and other Sunni armed groups imperils not only the stability of the government, but the lives of countless civilians, particularly ethnic and religious minorities, who face an ongoing risk of further mass atrocities.

The civil war in neighboring Syria has facilitated the growth of ISIL and exacerbated domestic conflict. Many Iraqi Sunni and Shia radicals originally joined armed groups fighting in Syria. However, the political paralysis of the Iraqi government has previously hampered efforts to prevent the spread of sectarian violence back into Iraq.

Despite a November 2010 power-sharing agreement between political parties representing Shias, Sunnis and Kurds, many Sunnis feel they were marginalized under the Maliki government. The government's response to a Sunni protest movement that started in December 2012 aggravated these divisions. ISIL has been able to exploit widespread Sunni disaffection to build alliances with Sunni militias and seize large swathes of territory and resources. Cultural identities and transnational loyalties continue to be manipulated by various political forces in Iraq and contribute to the government's inability to resolve the security crisis.

Human rights violations are routinely perpetrated by the ISF, who often commit abuses in the name of counter-terrorism. There are grave fears for the fate of civilians trapped by fighting between ISIL and the ISF or abandoned by retreating government forces. Some Shia militias, mobilized by the government to fight ISIL, also pose a grave threat to Sunni civilians. Meanwhile ISIL has consistently failed to protect civilians in areas under its control and is committed to the eradication of religious communities that do not conform to its strict interpretation of Islam.

The Iraqi government is failing to uphold its Responsibility to Protect and needs urgent international assistance.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

In the wake of ISIL's takeover of Mosul, Iran and the United States offered political and military support to the Iraqi government. The UN Secretary-General condemned the increasing violence and called upon all Iraqi leaders to ensure their followers avoid sectarian reprisals.

The UNSC issued a Press Statement on 21 July, condemning threats against religious and ethnic minorities in Mosul. In two additional statements on 5 and 7 August, the UNSC condemned ISIL attacks on Sinjar and Tal Afar and the "systematic persecution of individuals from minority populations," which may constitute crimes against humanity. The UNSC called upon all parties to abide by IHL and protect civilians. On 15 August the UNSC adopted Resolution 2170, condemning "gross, systematic and widespread abuses" by ISIL and al-Qaeda affiliated groups operating in Iraq and Syria.

On 12 August the UN Special Advisers to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide and the Responsibility to Protect condemned the reported execution of 500 Yazidis by ISIL, warning that such acts may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity and may also "point to the risk of genocide."

Australia, France, the United Kingdom and the United States have sent emergency humanitarian aid to besieged populations on Mount Sinjar and in Amerli. On 12 August French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius requested that the European Union consider military assistance to Kurdish Peshmerga fighters battling ISIL. Albania, Canada, Croatia, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom have thus far committed to providing military assistance.

On 1 September the UN Human Rights Council convened a special session on abuses in Iraq committed by ISIL, during which the body supported the request of the Iraqi government to dispatch a fact-finding mission.

NECESSARY ACTION

The international community should continue to provide military support to the Iraqi government to combat the immediate threat posed by ISIL to vulnerable civilian populations, especially religious and ethnic minorities. While confronting ISIL and other extremist armed groups, the government must protect civilians and address the underlying sources of conflict between Sunnis, Shias and Kurds in Iraq. Populations displaced by ISIL attacks and fighting between ISIL and the ISF require urgent humanitarian assistance.

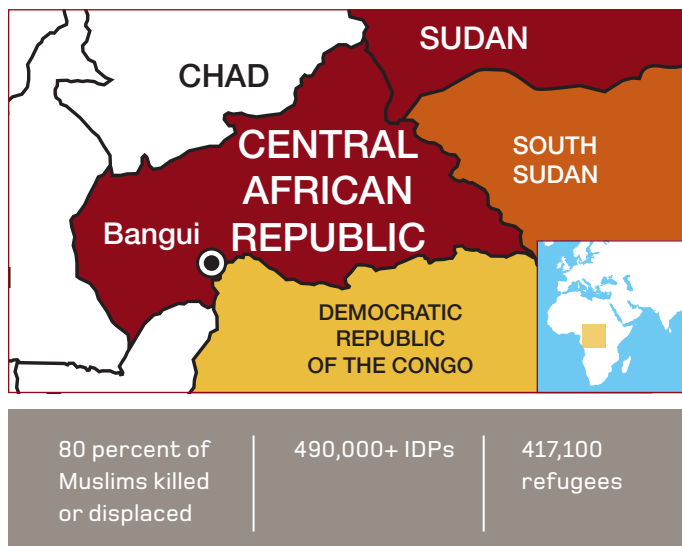
The government must actively prevent reprisals against Sunni communities by the ISF and Shia militias. The government and its international supporters, especially the United States, must ensure that the ISF complies with its obligations under international human rights law. The Kurdistan Regional

Government is also in need of international support to defend vulnerable populations from ongoing ISIL attacks.

Sunni, Shia and Kurdish political leaders must work to address issues of regional autonomy and perceptions of sectarian discrimination. Politicians should refrain from incendiary sectarian speech and work towards national reconciliation, including equal treatment and representation for all communities.

MORE INFORMATION

- » [UNAMI Website](#)
- » [Report of the Protection of Civilians in the Non International Armed Conflict in Iraq: 5 June – 5 July 2014](#), UNAMI and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 18 July 2014
- » [UNSC Press Statement on Iraq](#), 7 August 2014
- » [Statement by the UN Special Advisers for the Prevention of Genocide and the Responsibility to Protect](#), 12 August 2014
- » [UN Casualty Figures for August](#), 1 September 2014
- » [GCR2P Populations at Risk: Iraq](#)



CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

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

BACKGROUND

Violence against civilians is pervasive throughout the Central African Republic (CAR) despite the deployment of French forces, an African Union peacekeeping mission (MISCA) and a European Union (EU) military operation. The Muslim population is being systematically targeted by the predominantly Christian and animist "anti-balaka" militias and mobs of civilians. Formed largely in response to abuses by the Séléka rebel alliance, the primarily Muslim armed group who overthrew former President Francois Bozizé on 24 March 2013, anti-balaka militias have conducted deadly reprisals against Muslims and other groups and are responsible for the majority of civilian deaths in CAR.

On 5 June the UN Commission of Inquiry on CAR released its preliminary report on the crisis, which concluded that ample evidence exists that individuals from both sides of the conflict have committed violations of international humanitarian and human rights law. The Commission's report suggested that "acts of genocide" and ethnic cleansing may have been perpetrated by the anti-balaka against the Muslim population of CAR.

Approximately 80 percent of the country's Muslim population has been forced to flee or has been killed since September 2013. The UN and humanitarian organizations, with the assistance of French forces and MISCA peacekeepers, have relocated some vulnerable civilians. Nevertheless, UNHCR estimates that 18,680 Muslims in nine threatened communities remain at "very high risk" of attack, including 5,670 in the town of Boda. A 5 August report of the UN Secretary-General highlighted that the anti-balaka systematically encircle these enclaves, subject them to attack and cut them off from food and medical supplies. Tensions have mounted in Boda since 14 August following clashes between the anti-balaka and armed civilians from the Muslim community, with at least 50 people killed between 27 and 30 August.

A self-defense militia that operates in the PK5 area of Bangui, where some 2,200 Muslims are besieged, clashed with EU and French troops between 19 and 21 August. These incidents left at least five Muslims and a Red Cross volunteer dead.

Fighting between the anti-balaka, ex-Séléka and other armed groups has intensified in northern, central and eastern prefectures, despite the signing of a ceasefire agreement on 23 July. On 4 August ex-Séléka forces attacked French and MISCA forces in Batangafo. The fighting resulted in at least 50 ex-Séléka killed, as well as a number of civilians. Between 13 and 15 August at least 38 civilians were killed by suspected ex-Séléka fighters near Mbres, Nana-Grébizi prefecture. Fighting between rival factions of the ex-Séléka in Bambari from 25 to 28 August resulted in 89 people killed. On 28 August anti-balaka militias attacked Fulani herders affiliated with the ex-Séléka in Simbolo, killing at least 32 people.

Over 176,000 civilians have fled to neighboring countries since December 2013, bringing the total number of CAR refugees to more than 417,100. There are currently more than 490,560 IDPs in CAR, including at least 67,500 people spread across 38 sites in Bangui. At least 2.5 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance. According to reports, at least 5,185 civilians have been killed since December 2013.

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

ANALYSIS

CAR has suffered decades of poor governance, recurring instability and humanitarian crisis. Since March 2013 the state has effectively ceased to function. The interim government cannot prevent various armed groups and civilian mobs from perpetrating attacks.

Ongoing fighting between anti-balaka, ex-Séléka and other armed groups, as well as between international peacekeepers and these groups, has increased the risks to civilians. Fighting has occurred in prefectures that split the country between North and South and East and West. The country is now effectively partitioned, with the anti-balaka controlling territory in western CAR and the ex-Séléka establishing control in the east. Religious and ethnic identity has also been manipulated, with communities mobilized against one another. Deadly attacks on civilians continue to be conducted openly and without fear of sanction.

The ceasefire agreement signed on 23 July faces numerous challenges. The anti-balaka and ex-Séléka are loosely affiliated groups that do not operate under central command and are prone to factional infighting. Political and military elites seeking to maintain or gain power, including leaders linked to the ex-Séléka, anti-balaka and former President Bozizé, continue to exacerbate the crisis.

Despite the efforts of French and MISCA peacekeepers, civilians have not been afforded adequate protection from mass atrocity crimes.

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

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

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

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

France deployed 2,000 troops in CAR under the aegis of Operation Sangaris, while the African Union (AU) deployed 5,800 MISCA peacekeepers. Three French and twenty-six MISCA peacekeepers have been killed since 5 December. The EU military operation has approximately 700 troops on the ground responsible for protecting civilians in Bangui.

On 12 June the Chief Prosecutor of the ICC noted that the intervention of the Court is now "essential," following a formal request by the transitional authorities to open an investigation into crimes committed in CAR since August 2012.

The International Contact Group for CAR met for the fifth time on 7 July and outlined a three-step process to end hostilities and promote national dialogue and reconciliation. A three-day forum was held in Brazzaville, Congo, between 21 and 23 July that led to the aforementioned cessation of hostilities agreement between the anti-balaka, ex-Séléka and representatives of five other armed groups.

A UNSC-mandated peacekeeping operation, the UN Multi-dimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the CAR, or MINUSCA, will assume authority from MISCA on 15 September. Following a briefing to the UNSC on 19 August, Special Representative to the Secretary-General and Head of MINUSCA Babacar Gaye stated that the peacekeeping operation would receive an additional 1,800 troops as of 15 September that would join 5,800 "re-hatted" MISCA troops.

NECESSARY ACTION

The interim government must publicly condemn all attacks on civilians, especially against the Muslim minority. It is essential that perpetrators responsible for mass atrocity crimes be brought to justice.

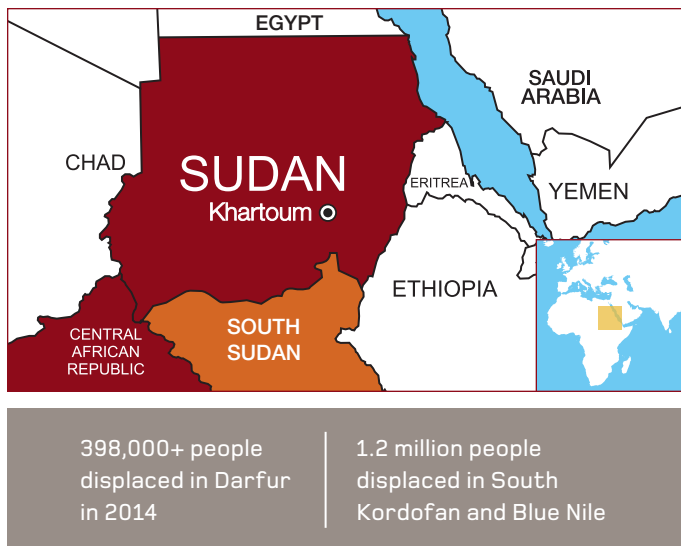
Local efforts to ease tensions between communities should be supported by international mediators and should be part of a broader strategy of working with CAR's authorities on national reconciliation. There is an urgent need for regional and international interlocutors to support the transitional government in efforts to promote disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of armed groups.

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

Additional troops, including formed police units, should be expeditiously deployed. Logistical support to MINUSCA as well as funding for humanitarian assistance must be increased. Re-hatted troops that will participate in MINUSCA must be strenuously vetted and trained to strictly abide by the UN Human Rights Due Diligence Policy.

MORE INFORMATION

- » [MINUSCA Website](#)
- » [UN Secretary-General's Report S/2014/562](#), 1 August 2014
- » [UNSC Resolution S/RES/2149](#), 10 April 2014
- » [GCR2P Populations at Risk: Central African Republic](#)



SUDAN

Populations in South Kordofan and Blue Nile continue to face mass atrocity crimes perpetrated by the Sudanese Armed Forces and affiliated armed groups. Populations in Darfur are also at risk of mass atrocities due to inter-communal violence and attacks by government forces.

BACKGROUND

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

The SAF and their allied paramilitaries, the Popular Defense Forces (PDF), have committed war crimes, including extra-judicial killing, forced displacement and sexual violence against civilians in South Kordofan and Blue Nile. The SAF has engaged in the widespread use of "scorched earth" tactics, including the systematic targeting of food sources and deliberate destruction of civilian structures. The SPLM-N has also perpetrated war crimes.

Indiscriminate aerial bombardments by the SAF have increased as part of a summer military offensive conducted since April. SAF attacks included airstrikes on medical facilities during May and June. The SAF indiscriminately shelled civilian areas in Delami County between 12 and 27 April. The SPLM-N launched a counter-offensive on 28 May by indiscriminately shelling Kadugli, in direct violation of IHL. The SAF's intensified bombing campaign coincided with South Kordofan's planting season, which takes place from May to July.

The ongoing conflict has led to the internal displacement of over 1.2 million civilians, while more than 243,500 have fled to South Sudan and Ethiopia. The upsurge in violence since April has resulted in over 116,000 new IDPs. The government continues

to block UN agencies, international humanitarian organizations and independent media from access to rebel-held areas in South Kordofan and Blue Nile. While the rainy season has resulted in a reduction in fighting since late May, it has also meant less accurate reporting of ongoing attacks on civilians.

On 1 February the government ordered the International Committee of the Red Cross to halt operations in Sudan, with severe consequences for the population in areas affected by armed conflict. On 28 August the government finally agreed to allow operations to resume.

Sudan has consistently failed to honor AU-brokered agreements and UNSC resolutions calling for a cessation of hostilities. This includes the failure to end aerial bombardments, disarm pro-government militias and allow humanitarian access.

Direct negotiations between the government of Sudan and the SPLM-N were held on 22 April under the auspices of the AU High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) for Sudan. The talks collapsed due to the failure of both sides to agree upon a framework agreement for negotiations.

The security situation in Darfur has also deteriorated as a result of escalating inter-communal violence and SAF ground and air operations. Fighting between the SAF and rebel groups has contributed to the displacement of nearly 400,000 people so far this year.

Between late February and early August the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), a government-sponsored mixed force of SAF and various militias, targeted villages in South Darfur resulting in civilian fatalities, destruction of property and displacement of over 45,000 people. The RSF has also attacked civilians in North Darfur.

The AU-UN hybrid peacekeeping force in Darfur (UNAMID) has criticized the government for restricting its ability to uphold its civilian protection mandate.

ANALYSIS

The government of Sudan has a history of perpetrating atrocities in Darfur and during its civil war with the south. It has consistently defied external pressure to halt mass atrocity crimes. Such crimes are currently being committed in South Kordofan and Blue Nile, where patterns of violence targeting civilians for their perceived support of the SPLM-N have been witnessed for more than three years. Both the government and the SPLM-N have continued attacks against civilian areas despite negotiations.

Indiscriminate bombings of rebel-held areas demonstrate an unwillingness to distinguish between combatants and civilians, actions that violate IHL and may amount to crimes against humanity. The intensification of bombing during the planting season, combined with the refusal to allow humanitarian access, may demonstrate a deliberate strategy of denying food supplies to vulnerable civilian populations.

More than two years since the UNSC adopted Resolution 2046, which called for a negotiated settlement to the conflict in South Kordofan and Blue Nile, the UNSC and AU have failed to push the government of Sudan and the SPLM-N to honor agreements to cease hostilities and allow the delivery of humanitarian aid. The government has prohibited access to South Kordofan and Blue Nile and is systematically preventing aid from reaching populations that are now at risk of starvation.

Despite the presence of UNAMID, the security situation in Darfur continues to deteriorate. Recent inter-communal violence and the expanded operations of the SAF contribute to the risk of further mass atrocity crimes.

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

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

Members of the current government, including President Omar al-Bashir, the Defence Minister, Abdel Raheem Muhammad Hussein, and the current governor of North Kordofan, Ahmad Haroun, were indicted by the ICC in 2007 for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Darfur. The ICC issued a warrant for President Bashir in 2010 for perpetrating genocide in Darfur.

The UNSC has adopted 56 resolutions on Sudan since 2004, most of which have not been fully implemented. Acting on behalf of the AUHIP, former South African President Thabo Mbeki has facilitated regular talks between the government of Sudan and the SPLM-N since 2011. [For responses prior to June 2014, see [GCR2P's Timeline of International Response to the Situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States](#).]

On 27 August the UNSC adopted Resolution 2173, which extended UNAMID's mandate until 30 June 2015 and prioritized civilian protection and humanitarian efforts.

NECESSARY ACTION

The government of Sudan and the SPLM-N, in accordance with UNSC Resolution 2046, must cease hostilities and address the underlying causes of the conflict. The UNSC should expand the arms embargo on Darfur to include South Kordofan and Blue Nile.

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

UNAMID must robustly protect civilians facing an imminent threat of violence and facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Mediation efforts should be renewed between the

government of Sudan and armed groups operating in Darfur. The government of Sudan must stop obstructing UNAMID.

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

MORE INFORMATION

- » [UNISFA Website](#)
- » [UNAMID Website](#)
- » [UNSC Resolution S/Res/2173](#), 27 August 2014
- » [GCR2P Populations at Risk: Sudan](#)



4,000+ people
killed since
January 2014

650,000+ IDPs

400+ civilians
abducted by
Boko Haram

NIGERIA

Mass atrocity crimes are being perpetrated by the extremist group Boko Haram as it intensifies its attacks in northern Nigeria. Excessive use of force by security forces as they confront Boko Haram and recurring inter-communal violence also contribute to the threat to civilians.

BACKGROUND

Unprecedented violence by the extremist group Boko Haram over the past six months has resulted in mass atrocities perpetrated against populations in northern Nigeria. Recent Boko Haram attacks have included large-scale abductions of civilians and seizures of towns. While Boko Haram has primarily perpetrated attacks in three northern states – Adamawa, Borno and Yobe – since April the group has widened the scope of its operations, indiscriminately bombing locations in Abuja as well as in Jigawa, Kano and Kaduna states. It has also carried out cross-border raids into Cameroon.

Despite the ongoing military state of emergency, which was declared by President Goodluck Jonathan for Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states in May 2013, Boko Haram attacks have escalated in the past year. Boko Haram has killed more than 3,300 civilians

since the state of emergency began, by comparison to less than 2,500 casualties in the four years prior. According to UNHCR, more than 650,000 people have been displaced since May 2013.

During April 2014 Boko Haram abducted more than 270 girls from a boarding school in Chibok, Borno state. While some students escaped, more than 200 are still being held hostage and the group has since abducted more than 100 civilians from other towns in Borno.

Since July Boko Haram has seized major towns, resulting in widespread civilian displacement. The group has captured at least six major areas of Borno state, including Damboa on 20 July, Gwoza on 6 August and Bama on 1 September. At the time of publication civilians were fleeing Maiduguri, the capital of Borno state, claiming it was encircled by Boko Haram and fearing it was the next target for a major assault.

Boko Haram has been perpetrating attacks against civilians since 2009 and is committed to overthrowing Nigeria's secular government and establishing an Islamic state. Boko Haram's leader, Abubakar Shekau, has vowed to kill all Muslims who "follow democracy" and has said that Boko Haram is at war "against Christians and democracy." On 24 August Shekau declared that towns seized by Boko Haram are now "part of the Islamic state."

Nigerian security forces have been consistently accused of failing to provide sufficient protection to civilians from Boko Haram. Recurring abductions and attacks often take place without adequate response by the security forces. There have been numerous reports of soldiers deserting their posts before and during Boko Haram attacks, including in recently seized towns in Borno.

The security forces have also been accused of committing grave human rights violations, including extrajudicial killings, against suspected Boko Haram members. On 5 August Amnesty International released evidence of "multiple war crimes" carried out by the Nigerian military. The "Civilian Joint Task Force" (CJTF), a collection of civilian vigilante groups formed in response to Boko Haram, has also been implicated in grave human rights abuses.

ANALYSIS

Seizure and control of towns by Boko Haram underlines the growing capability of the group and demonstrates the inability of the military to improve the security situation in the northeast. As Boko Haram's attacks intensify, Nigeria risks losing control of Borno state entirely. The expansion of Boko Haram's attacks in Abuja and across the border in Cameroon creates a wider emergency that the government currently lacks the capacity to address.

While Boko Haram continues to target Christians, moderate Muslims, government officials and pro-government vigilantes, as well as students and teachers, there has been a significant increase in indiscriminate attacks against all civilians. Boko Haram also appears to have started using young women and

children as suicide bombers, drawing the most vulnerable populations further into the conflict. Civilian displacement and ongoing insecurity has increased unemployment and poverty, leaving people without basic resources. Boko Haram attacks also exacerbate existing social, ethnic and religious tensions, heightening the possibility of renewed inter-communal violence, particularly in the volatile "Middle Belt" region.

The government has been unable to adequately protect populations from Boko Haram attacks, while the security forces' alleged acts of arbitrary detention and extra-judicial killing of suspected Boko Haram members violate international human rights law and may constitute crimes against humanity. While the CJTF are believed to be filling some protection gaps, vigilantes have blurred the lines between civilians and the security forces and prompted reprisal attacks by Boko Haram.

While the lack of adequate military protection for vulnerable populations needs to be urgently addressed, social initiatives and political reforms remain crucial to confronting the root causes of conflict in northern and central Nigeria. Conflict in Nigeria stems from a number of sources, including poor governance, widespread corruption, as well as lack of employment opportunities. Without seriously addressing these issues, the possibility of ending Boko Haram's insurgency and preventing future conflict are minimal.

General elections scheduled for 2015 may further exacerbate growing political tensions.

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

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

The abduction of the Chibok schoolgirls in April drew unprecedented international attention to the threat posed by Boko Haram. The abduction was condemned by numerous governments as well as the UN Secretary-General, the High Commissioner for Human Rights and other UN bodies. President Jonathan accepted offers from the United States, United Kingdom, France and China to provide assistance in finding and freeing the Chibok schoolgirls.

Nigeria is currently an elected member of the UNSC. The UNSC has not directly addressed the threat posed by Boko Haram since 9 May, but has expressed concern over cross-border attacks in statements regarding the West African region on 9 July and 17 August.

On 23 July Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Cameroon pledged to mobilize a joint force against Boko Haram, with each state contributing 700 troops. Cameroon has also increased border security in response to recent Boko Haram incursions.

The Paris Summit of 17 May and the London Ministerial meeting of 12 June on the security situation in Nigeria affirmed commitments of regional and international partners to increase

coordinated action against Boko Haram. On 3 September, following the fall of Bama, foreign ministers from neighboring states and representatives from the UN and AU as well as the United States, United Kingdom, France and Canada met to review progress since the Paris and London meetings and offer further military support.

NECESSARY ACTION

Nigerian security forces must enhance protection of vulnerable communities, especially in the northeast of the country. With international assistance, the government urgently needs to undertake security sector reform to ensure that the army and police are trained to prevent mass atrocities while respecting human rights.

Authorities should complement their security response by implementing the government's declared "soft approach," aimed at addressing underlying causes of conflict and undermining Boko Haram. Reforms should be expanded to central and northwestern states where recurring inter-communal conflict also threatens safety and security. The government should also conduct investigations into alleged grave abuses committed by the military against civilians.

The UN, AU and Economic Community of West African States, along with states with significant bilateral ties to Nigeria, such as the United States and United Kingdom, should continue to assist the government in upholding its Responsibility to Protect its population. These actors should urge the authorities to strengthen the rule of law and ensure accountability for all grave human rights violations.

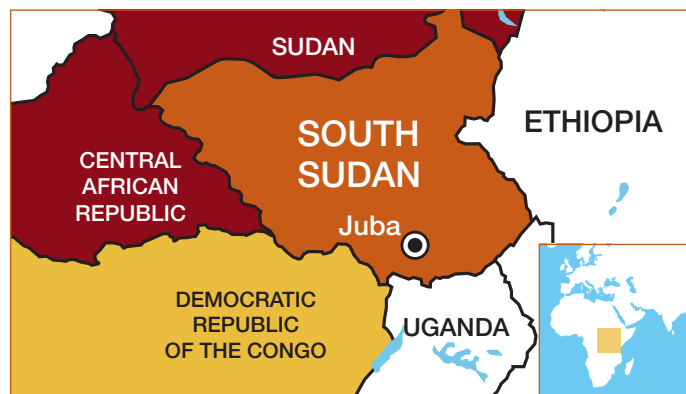
As Nigeria prepares for the 2015 general elections, politicians from all parties should refrain from inflammatory statements that could deepen religious, ethnic and inter-communal divisions.

MORE INFORMATION

- » ["Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa," Security Council S/2014/442, 26 June 2014](#)
- » [UNSC Press Statement SC/11466, AFR/2930, 9 July 2014](#)
- » ["Nigeria: Gruesome footage implicates military in war crimes," Amnesty International, 5 August 2014](#)
- » [UNSC Press Statement, SC/11535, 27 August 2014](#)
- » [GCR2P Populations at Risk: Nigeria](#)

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.



10,000+ people
killed since 15
December

99,500 civilians
sheltering in 9
UN bases

1.3 million
IDPs since 15
December

SOUTH SUDAN

Renewed fighting in South Sudan's civil war puts civilians at imminent risk of further mass atrocity crimes.

BACKGROUND

While the rainy season, which started in May, initially decreased fighting between government and rebel forces in South Sudan,

violent clashes continue in Unity, Jonglei and Upper Nile states, resulting in large-scale civilian displacement.

On 15 August, shortly after the end of a UNSC visit, heavy fighting resumed between government and rebel forces, putting civilians at risk of further mass atrocities. Intense clashes were reported around Ayod, Jonglei state, and Bentiu, a town in Unity state that has changed hands several times since the start of the civil war in December 2013 and where atrocities were committed in April.

Earlier fighting was reported on 20 July when opposition forces launched an attack on Nassir Town, Upper Nile state. Government forces responded with a counter offensive on 23 July and retook the town. Fighting was also reported between the Mabanese Defence Forces (MDF), a self-defence militia, and deserting Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) soldiers around Bunji, Upper Nile State, on 4 August. The MDF has targeted ethnic Nuers, including killing six Nuer aid workers. The UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) has dispatched troops and evacuated humanitarian workers from the area.

The ongoing civil war is the result of a conflict that started between SPLA soldiers from rival political and ethnic groups. Over 10,000 people have been killed and 1.3 million displaced since 15 December, including over 99,500 who have sought refuge in

nine UNMISS bases across the country. The fighting began after President Kiir accused Machar, who was removed from office during July 2013, of an attempted coup. The worst fighting continues to be between ethnic Dinka and Nuer soldiers loyal to the President and former Vice-President, respectively.

Fighting continues despite the signing of multiple peace agreements. Both sides violated a 23 January Cessation of Hostilities (COH) agreement almost immediately after it was signed. Following further negotiations, President Kiir and Machar subsequently signed a 9 May peace agreement, which called for "an immediate cessation of hostilities within 24 hours." Both sides met again on 4 August to resume peace negotiations under the auspices of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). The parties failed to meet a 10 August deadline to form a transitional government shortly before the resumption of large-scale armed hostilities. President Kiir agreed to a 25 August IGAD proposal which called for a unity government within 45 days. On 28 August the opposition rejected the proposal.

Due to the security crisis and a shortage of personnel, UNMISS has been unable to patrol frequently outside of their bases. In order to support UNMISS' efforts to implement its protection of civilians mandate, the UNSC adopted Resolution 2132 on 24 December, temporarily enlarging UNMISS by an additional 5,500 troops and 440 police. These troops are yet to be fully deployed. On 26 August an UNMISS helicopter was shot down near Bentiu. Investigations are ongoing, but the opposition has been accused of responsibility for the attack.

ANALYSIS

The rapid descent into civil war in late 2013 highlights the fragility of South Sudan's government as well as the SPLA's political and ethnic divisions, which have allegedly resulted in 70 percent of the army either defecting or deserting. The ethnic dimension to the conflict increases the risk to civilians, especially as heavy fighting appears to have resumed around several major towns. The failure to uphold the peace agreement reveals a lack of commitment to a political solution.

The rainy season has hindered UNMISS' ability to protect civilians, but also reduced the capacity of both sides to fight as most roads were flooded. The UN had already warned that both parties to the conflict were mobilizing forces and amassing weapons ahead of the start of the dry season in early October.

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

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

On 27 May the UNSC adopted Resolution 2155 extending UNMISS' civilian protection mandate until November 2014 and noting that the government of South Sudan bears "the primary responsibility to protect civilians within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction, including from potential crimes against humanity and war crimes." [For responses prior to August 2014 [see GCR2P's Timeline of International Response to the Situation in South Sudan.](#)]

The UNSC adopted a Presidential Statement on 8 August, condemning repeated violations of the ceasefire and expressing its readiness to impose targeted sanctions against those who have undermined peace in South Sudan. The UNSC visited Juba on 12 August where they met with President Kiir and also spoke to Machar via video teleconference.

IGAD issued a statement on 15 August, condemning renewed fighting in Bentiu. IGAD called upon the parties to adhere to the COH and commit to the peace process. The Office of the IGAD Special Envoys for South Sudan released a summary report of ceasefire violations for the period up to 21 August 2014, concluding that both sides were responsible for ongoing fighting.

The UNSC issued a Press Statement on 27 August, condemning the downing of the UNMISS helicopter and calling upon the government of South Sudan to conduct an investigation into the attack.

NECESSARY ACTION

The UNSC and IGAD should immediately impose targeted sanctions on all political and military leaders deemed responsible for a resumption of armed hostilities and for previous mass atrocities.

President Kiir and Machar must abide by the commitments made under the COH and continue to engage with IGAD to resolve the crisis. The UNSC, AU and major international supporters of South Sudan, especially the United States, should establish a Contact Group and ensure both parties fully implement the 9 May peace agreement. The opposition must reengage with the IGAD-led peace process and commit to resolving the conflict.

UNMISS must robustly implement its civilian protection mandate. The international community should enhance UNMISS' capabilities through the rapid provision of additional troops and resources, including level-two field hospitals and additional aviation assets. The supply of tactical and utility helicopters will assist surveillance efforts aimed at detecting and preventing potential attacks on vulnerable communities. The government of South Sudan must ensure that UNMISS has the ability to move freely to all parts of the country.

UNMISS' Human Rights Division and the AU Commission of Inquiry must continue their investigations of extra-judicial killings and possible mass executions. The government must hold all perpetrators of mass atrocities accountable, regardless of their affiliation or position.

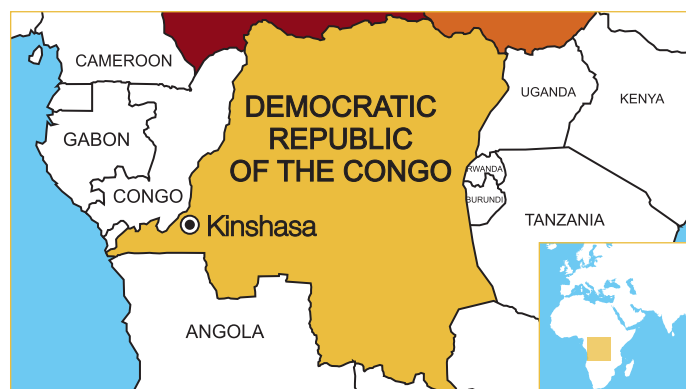
The government of South Sudan must initiate a comprehensive strategy aimed at ethnic and political reconciliation.

MORE INFORMATION:

- » [UNMISS Website](#)
- » [UNSC Presidential Statement S/PRST/2014/16](#), 8 August 2014
- » [AU Press Statement on the Commission of Inquiry in South Sudan](#), 18 August 2014
- » [IGAD Communiqué of the 27th Extraordinary Summit of IGAD Heads of State and Government on South Sudan](#), 25 August 2014
- » [UNSC Press Statement SC/11538](#), 27 August 2014
- » [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.



2.6 million IDPs

20+ armed groups
still operating in the
eastern DRC

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Populations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo remain at risk of mass atrocity crimes perpetrated by armed groups and military forces.

BACKGROUND

Pervasive insecurity in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has allowed armed groups to perpetrate mass atrocity crimes against the civilian population. Armed groups – namely the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) and various Mayi-Mayi militias – have been operating in the DRC for more than twenty years, but utilized the security vacuum created by the March 23 (M23) rebellion to attack populations with increasing frequency.

Patterns of violence committed by these groups, including killing, abduction and forced recruitment of civilians, were witnessed

in North Kivu, South Kivu, Katanga and Oriental Province over the past two years while the Armed Forces of the DRC (FARDC) was redeployed to confront M23. Violent clashes between rival rebel groups also threaten civilians. The government recorded over 15,000 incidents of sexual and gender-based violence in these four regions during 2013. There are currently more than 2.6 million IDPs in the eastern DRC.

The government recently launched a new offensive against armed groups operating in the eastern DRC with assistance from the UN mission in the DRC (MONUSCO), which includes an intervention brigade. In advance of offensive operations, the government and MONUSCO encouraged militias to participate in Disarmament, Demobilization, Repatriation, Reintegration and Resettlement (DDRRR) programs. During April leaders of the FDLR announced the group's intention to submit themselves to the DDRRR process, but very few of the approximately 1,500 FDLR members have surrendered.

The FARDC has also been implicated in attacks upon civilians, including 135 documented cases of rape committed in Minova during November 2012. Only two soldiers have been convicted for these crimes.

ANALYSIS

Despite M23's defeat, the threat posed by armed groups remains high. FARDC and MONUSCO offensives have resulted in further displacement of vulnerable populations.

The weakness of government structures undermines attempts to prevent atrocities. This is particularly evident in the eastern DRC, where the government has previously lost control of areas to various rebel groups and has historically been incapable of controlling its borders. While the government has undertaken important reforms, such as the recent appointment of a presidential adviser on conflict-related sexual violence and the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict, impunity for crimes committed against civilians remains rampant.

Competition for control of minerals as well as underlying conflict between communities that consider themselves indigenous and those with alleged Rwandan ancestry contribute to the pervasiveness of armed violence. Although a historic opportunity to eradicate armed groups remains following the defeat of M23, without adequately addressing the root causes of conflict armed groups will continue to emerge and threaten populations.

The government of the DRC has struggled to uphold its Responsibility to Protect and its own forces have been complicit in mass atrocity crimes. The DRC needs ongoing support to prevent atrocities by armed groups, especially the FDLR.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

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

On 28 March the UNSC extended the mandate of MONUSCO until 31 March 2015. The renewed mandate emphasized the need for MONUSCO to assist the government with security sector reform and DDRRR, increase accountability for mass atrocity crimes and combat the FDLR. The UNSC currently subjects 10 entities and 31 individuals, including several M23 and FDLR leaders, to the enforcement of travel bans and asset freezes.

The UN Secretary-General appointed Said Djinnit as his new Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region on 17 July.

On 12 and 13 August Heads of State and Ministers of Defense from the International Conference for the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) held a Mini Summit on the situation in the DRC to assess implementation of the 2013 Framework Agreement for Peace, Security and Cooperation in the DRC.

The UNSC issued a Press Statement on 26 August welcoming progress against armed groups and the diplomatic efforts of ICGLR and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The statement called for swift disarmament and neutralization of the FDLR.

NECESSARY ACTION

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

MONUSCO and FARDC troops must actively respond to warnings of imminent attacks against civilians. MONUSCO should support the government in facilitating local peacebuilding initiatives and encourage civil society to help facilitate DDRRR. The FARDC must not permit individuals who have previously committed atrocities to join its forces and should train all recruits in the protection of civilians, respect for human rights and IHL.

All perpetrators of mass atrocity crimes in the DRC, including members of the FARDC, need to be held accountable. The government should adopt legislation establishing specialized

mixed chambers in the national judicial system to ensure justice for crimes against humanity.

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

MORE INFORMATION

- » [MONUSCO Website](#)
- » [UNSC Resolution S/RES/2147](#), 28 March 2014
- » [UNSC Press Statement SC/11533](#), 26 August 2014
- » [GCR2P Populations at Risk: DRC](#)



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

BURMA/MYANMAR

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

BACKGROUND

Sporadic ethnic violence in Burma/Myanmar continues to put minority populations, particularly the Rohingya, at risk of mass atrocity crimes. Rohingyas continue to face discriminatory state policies, including the denial of citizenship and a two-child limit for families. Attacks against the broader Muslim community have recurred since June and October 2012, when clashes broke out in Arakan/Rakhine state, killing nearly 200 people. An estimated 138,000 people remain displaced as a result of this violence. Security forces have failed to adequately protect civilians and in some cases have been complicit in attacks on Muslims.

Following attacks during January against Rohingyas in Arakan/Rakhine state, the government ordered Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) to cease operations, shutting down the largest provider of healthcare among humanitarian organizations operating there. The government announced on 23 July that MSF could resume operations, but has yet to facilitate their return.

The former UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Myanmar, Tomás Ojea Quintana, has said that the violence against the Rohingya community could amount to crimes against humanity and warned on 30 May that the government's failure to address the human rights situation in Arakan/Rakhine state "will ultimately mean the extermination of the Rohingyas."

Former Special Rapporteur Quintana has also expressed concern over the "increasingly permanent" segregation of communities in Arakan/Rakhine state, with many Muslims confined to IDP camps and denied their fundamental human rights. Persecution has led thousands of Rohingyas to seek protection in neighboring countries, where they are often subject to further abuse, human trafficking and refoulement.

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.

ANALYSIS

Anti-Rohingya and anti-Muslim violence is evidence of a grave communal fracture that the government is failing to adequately address. The refusal to grant Rohingya access to citizenship or lift discriminatory state policies, as well as its failure to restrict anti-Rohingya hate speech, encourages ongoing violations of their most fundamental human rights. In March, the government denied Rohingyas the ability to self-identify on the first national census since 1983. This constitutes a failure to comply with international human rights standards and reinforces the dangerous perception that Rohingyas are ethnic outsiders.

Attacks by government armed forces (Tatmadaw) also pose a grave threat to civilians, particularly in Kachin state. With a pervasive culture of impunity, the military has not been held accountable for previous mass atrocity crimes.

The government of Burma/Myanmar is failing to uphold its primary Responsibility to Protect.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

Following decades of political isolation and military dictatorship, democratic reforms have contributed to rapprochement between Burma/Myanmar and the international community, including the lifting of sanctions and cancellation of bilateral debt by a number of countries. Burma/Myanmar holds the chairmanship of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) for 2014. [For responses prior to June 2014, [see GCR2P's Timeline of International Response to the Situation of the Rohingya and Anti-Muslim Violence in Burma/Myanmar.](#)]

On 26 June ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights warned that the "precursors to genocide" exist in Burma/Myanmar. The group urged the government to allow humanitarian organizations to resume full operations and to "carry out its responsibility to protect Rohingyas."

NECESSARY ACTION

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

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

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

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

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

MORE INFORMATION

- » [Situation of human rights in Myanmar](#), Human Rights Council, 26 March 2014
- » [Statement by ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights](#), 26 June 2014
- » [Statement of the UN Special Rapporteur](#), 26 July 2014
- » [GCR2P Populations at Risk: Burma/Myanmar](#)

Cambodia:

On 7 August the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia found Nuon Chea and Khieu Samphan, the last remaining senior leaders of the Khmer Rouge, guilty of crimes against humanity, including “extermination encompassing murder, political persecution, and other inhumane acts comprising forced transfer, enforced disappearances and attacks against human dignity.” They were each sentenced to life imprisonment.

The Netherlands:

On 16 July a Dutch court found the Netherlands government liable for the deaths of over 300 Bosnian Muslim men and boys who were victims of the 1995 genocide at Srebrenica. The victims were sheltering with Dutch UN peacekeepers before being handed over to the Bosnian Serb army, by whom they were subsequently killed. The ruling held the Netherlands government responsible for compensation to victims’ families.

Bosnia:

On 1 September Bosnian police detained thirteen former Bosnian Serb soldiers and policemen suspected of involvement in the murder and persecution of hundreds of Bosnian Croats and Bosnian Muslims during the 1992-95 war. The case was handed over from the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, where the trials of the top two Bosnian Serb leaders, Radovan Karadzic and General Ratka Mladić, are ongoing.

Germany:

Germany’s Finance Ministry confirmed on 4 September that it would provide one-time payments of 2,500 Euros to Jewish child survivors of the Holocaust. An estimated 75,000 survivors may qualify for the payments, designed to help with physical and psychological problems as a result of childhood malnutrition and emotional trauma. Germany’s Parliament is expected to approve the fund, which will become operational by 1 January 2015.

Palestinian Territories:

On 11 August the UN Human Rights Council announced the appointment of three experts to serve as members of an independent international commission of inquiry. The commission will investigate alleged violations of IHL and international human rights law in the Gaza Strip during the recent conflict between Israel and Hamas.



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Responsibility to Protect**

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