



General Assembly

Distr.: General
18 February 2019

English only

Human Rights Council

Fortieth session

25 February–22 March 2019

Agenda item 4

Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Written statement* submitted by Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights Association, a non- governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[10 February 2019]

* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.



Human Rights in South Sudan

Introduction

Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights (Egypt) presents this intervention on the human rights situation in South Sudan during the previous period. Prior to the peace agreement signing between the government and the opposition, South Sudan witnessed clear violations of human rights, which delayed the country's ability in working on development indicators as it was expected. As a result of war, the country has reached an economic crisis which is connected to human rights. The following is a review of the most important human rights situations in South Sudan.

First: Developments in the Situation of Human Rights in South Sudan:

A. External interventions:

Because of the breach of cease-fire agreement more than once, the United States of America imposed a unilateral arms embargo on southern Sudan in February 2017. It also imposed arms embargo on three individuals who, as the US saw, were involved in the conflict in 2018¹. Moreover, US punished 15 oil entities, describing them as "sources of conflict development"². The UN Security Council also imposed arms embargo, travel ban and assets freeze³. This affected the human rights situation in southern Sudan as a result of the increased impact of economic sanctions.

B. Lack of access to humanitarian assistance:

Conflict parties stopped humanitarian aid through violence against humanitarian workers. At least 100 aid workers have been killed since the beginning of their work in 2013⁴. Humanitarian armed groups have also been forced to move from their operation areas which led to the suspension of their services. More than 670 tons of foods were stolen from relief compounds in July 2017⁵. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in South Sudan announced that aid delivery organizations had experienced 95 blockage incidents in June 2018.

C. The decline of economic and social rights

Despite the signing of the peace agreement, food insecurity severely continues South Sudan. FAO, UNICEF and WFP reported that 6 million people in South Sudan are at risk of hunger due to ongoing conflict⁶. It is worth noting that the poverty rate in South Sudan reached 82.3%⁷.

¹ Office of the Spokesperson, "The United States Sanctions Three Individuals for Threatening Peace in South Sudan", US Department of State, December 14, 2018, on this link: <https://bit.ly/2teKoxv> , access date: 1/1/2019

² Lesley Wroughton, Timothy Gardner, "U.S. targets South Sudan oil firms with sanctions to choke off war funds", Reuters, 21/3/2018, on this link: <https://reut.rs/2GRfwt1> , access date: 2/1/2019.

³ Jocelyne Sambira, "UN sanctions on South Sudan renewed", published on UN Africa Renewal Online, on this link: <https://bit.ly/2I6lppE> , access date: 1/2/2019.

⁴ (OCHA South Sudan, "South Sudan: aid workers freed, humanitarian deaths reach 100 since December 2013", UN Mission In South Sudan, 30 April 2018, on this link: <https://bit.ly/2WNLfDa> , access date: 2/1/2019.

⁵ The Amnesty International Report 2017/2018, op.cit

⁶ Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, The Republic of South Sudan, September 2018, on this link: <https://bit.ly/2MUwbiz>

⁷ World Bank Data, for more details follow this link: <https://data.worldbank.org/country/south-sudan>

D. The decline of civil and political rights:

Despite the release of some detainees, the authorities continued to carry out arbitrary arrests, detaining those who are believed to be government opponents, for long periods without charge or trial. Some persons, who believed to be government opponents, were subjected to enforced disappearance by the National Security Service and the Directorate of Military Intelligence⁸. South Sudan ranks 144 out of 180 countries in the Freedom of the Press Index 2018⁹.

E. Increasing crisis of displacement and asylum:

South Sudan joined The 1951 Refugee Convention and 1967 Protocol when President Salva Kiir signed the convention in Juba on 28 September 2018. However, the number of refugees reached 2,268,5118 refugees and 1.76 million internally displaced persons who had to leave their homes. Most of them were in the Sudan, Uganda and Ethiopia¹⁰.

F. Lack of the right to security:

Prior to the signing of the reconciliation agreement between the Government and the opposition, both sides committed civilians killing on the basis of race or perceived political loyalty, stole civilian property and kidnapping. It is estimated that more than 382,000 people were killed as a result of the civil war¹¹. South Sudan was ranked 14th in The Global Terrorism Index¹².

G. Violence against Woman:

Sexual violence has been widespread throughout the country, accompanied by a lack of accountability and women's extreme fear of reporting crimes against them. For example, reports showed atrocities committed by government, pro-government forces and armed youth in at least 40 villages. At least 120 women and girls, including pregnant, lactating mothers and girls under the age of four, were raped¹³.

Second: Recommendations

As a result of the above mentioned, Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights presents a number of recommendations that must be taken into account during the current and upcoming period regarding the promotion of the human rights situation in South Sudan:

1. Decreasing the economic sanctions on the Government of South Sudan, especially after the new agreement between the government and the opposition, with the need to monitor the continuation of this agreement by the United Nations and the African Union.
2. Working on increasing the access of humanitarian aid under security supervision of UN. With the need to increase such assistance as a result of the severe hunger crisis in southern Sudan suffered by most of the population.
3. Developing a national strategy to combat poverty, especially in areas that have been severely affected by the conflict since 2013. Expanding cooperation with rescue and

⁸ The Amnesty International Report 2017/2018.

⁹ Press Freedom Index 2018, op.cit.

¹⁰ UNHCR South Sudan emergency, "Refugees and asylum-seekers from South Sudan - Total " published on UNHCR Website, on this link: <https://bit.ly/2UO4F9a> , access date: 2/2/2019 .

¹¹ Francesco Checchi with others, "War in South Sudan estimated to have led to almost 400,000 excess deaths", Published by: London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, on 26 September 2018, on this link: <https://bit.ly/2IIV0GB> , access date: 2/2/2019

¹² Global Terrorism Index 2018, op.cit.

¹³ UNMISS Report, "Indiscriminate Attacks Against Civilians In Southern Unity", jointly published by the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), April-May 2018, P.7.

humanitarian agencies and involving them in the development and implementation of that strategy.

4. Stopping political repression and dealing with political debate as a necessity for peaceful transition in parallel with economic reform.

5. Taking the necessary measures to ensure the freedom of the media, in addition to the development of free and independent media sector as a fundamental part of the political settlement. And releasing political prisoners as long as no convictions have been established against them.

6. Developing a comprehensive strategy to address the waves of asylum , displacement and illegal migration, resolving their legal situation outside the country, and focusing on the humanitarian situation among the displaced, especially children and the elderly.

7. Conducting extensive investigations into gross violations of women's rights and punishing those accused of crimes of sexual violence and rape in previous periods. There is also a need to involve women in peace processes.
