

SOUTH SUDAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
(SSHRC)

Interim Report on South Sudan Internal Conflict
December 15, 2013 - March 15, 2014

1. Introduction

This is a report of the South Sudan Human Rights Commission (SSHRC) on the human rights situation in South Sudan following the fighting that erupted in Juba in the night of 15th December, 2013 and spread to other parts of the country notably to Jonglei, Unity and Upper Nile States. The SSHRC has a wide constitutional mandate which includes the mandate to investigate and report on violations of human rights in the country. This report is in line with that mandate and chronicles the Commission's findings and views on the human rights situation associated with the conflict between 15th December, 2013 and 15th March 2014. Since the eruption of the fighting the SSHRC has monitored and followed the events and their consequences and its findings in form of the content of this report. This however is an interim report with recommendations pending a full report in the SSHRC Annual Report for the year 2013/2014.

The collection of information and or evidence for this report was a very difficult challenge given the extent of the fighting and the resultant insecurity in the country that made it extremely impossible to travel to or move about in the areas of conflict. The Commission therefore had to adopt some strategies in order to collect information as much as possible. The strategies included the use of both deductive and inductive monitoring strategies by the Human Rights Officers in the Commission to determine the nature and level of human rights violations associated with the crisis. Three methods were employed namely: covert observation which was mainly carried out in Juba; key informant interviews that helped in eliciting information and directing the monitors to specific human rights situations and events. The Commission also consulted other human rights defenders and monitors across the country as well as some individuals that were caught up in the war situation. The Commission monitors also reviewed and verified human rights reports on the crisis produced by other human rights actors.

2. Background

2.1. Political dimension of the conflict

The current crisis in South Sudan began in the night of 15 December, 2013 but its genesis could be traced back to July 2013 when President Salva Kiir Mayardit made a major reshuffle in his cabinet. The reshuffle dropped key personalities including then Vice President Riek Machar from the Cabinet and reduced the number of ministers. The reshuffle was lauded by many analysts as a positive step and was also appreciated by many citizens as a good step in saving resources to be used for the basic services delivery and improved infrastructure. The reshuffle however had the effect of heightening political rivalries and tensions within the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), the ruling party.

Prior to the July 2013 reshuffle, key members of the SPLM had begun campaigns within the ruling party aimed at assuming the leadership of the party and subsequently the leadership of the country. Riek Machar who was Vice President and also deputy to Salva Kiir in the party openly expressed his desire to challenge Salva Kiir for the leadership of the SPLM and therefore Salva Kiir's leadership as

the head of State. Other senior members of the party also openly expressed the same ambition and intention. These included: Pagan Amum who was the then SPLM Secretary General and Rebecca Nyandeng the Presidential Advisor on Gender and Human Rights. Furthermore, Riek's open views on the Constitution of the SPLM did represent and demonstrate discontentment within the SPLM circles.

It is on the back of this background that the onset of the ongoing crisis on the night of 15th December, 2013 came following the conclusion of the SPLM's National Liberation Council in Juba. The SPLM National Liberation Council meeting held in Nyakuron Cultural Centre which was convened to review and approve the party's draft basic documents ahead of the expected 2015 general elections was marred by tensions. On 14th December 2013, the political dimension of the conflict was very apparent on the proceedings of the meeting where President Kiir addressed his comrades in the presence of his deputy Riek Machar. The latter described the speech of the SPLM Chairman as hostile¹. The tension came about when a section of the SPLM senior party leaders (reportedly 14 out of 124 of the Council members) declared their opposition to the Chairman of the party and their intention to challenge him in the expected National Convention scheduled for early 2014. Despite the tensions the party went ahead with the National Liberation Council (NLC) meeting which began on Saturday 14th December 2013. On Sunday December 15, 2013 was the last day of the meeting to discuss and approve the documents but the 14 members opposed to the chairman did not attend. The day ended with the approval of the SPLM documents in the absence of the 14 members who had boycotted the last day of the meeting. The 14 members boycotted the meeting probably after realizing that they constituted a minority and as such their views were unlikely to be taken on board.

On December 15, Riek and his allies abandoned the meeting of the Liberation Council. However, the meeting concluded by the approval of the SPLM Constitution and Manifesto by 124 majority votes against 14 absentee members. The disputes within the National Liberation Council seem therefore to have resulted into heightened political tensions. How this escalated and led to the onset of fighting in the night of 15th December, 2013 is not clear and has been viciously disputed by both opposing sides of the crisis. This political wrangling and anger within the ruling party was however translated into armed conflict between the forces loyal to the two camps. The government strongly believed that Riek Machar staged an attempted Coup D'état against a legitimately elected government a charge which Riek Machar and his group strongly deny. However what is known is that fighting erupted at around 10:00 pm among soldiers of the Tiger Battalion also known as the Republican Guards. This sparked off fighting in other army installations including the army general headquarters at Bilpam and other sections of Juba city. In the following days, the problem spread quickly to include Jonglei, Unity and Upper Nile States thus creating a full scale nation crisis and Riek Machar announcing his intension to remove the Government of Salva Kiir with the force of arms.

¹ Video on You Tube, Citizens News Paper and El-Masir (Destiny

2.2. Ethnic dimensions of the Conflict

South Sudan is a multi-ethnic society comprised of more than 60 different ethnic communities. Such reality should have been reflected at least in the establishment of key national institutions including the army. The Sudan peoples' Liberation Army (SPLA) the national army absorbed former ethnic militias in 2005 following the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and subsequently continued to absorb more tribally based armed groups. The process of absorbing the large number of ethnic armed groups basically resulted into Nuer-led armed groups constituting a tribal majority in the SPLA. Some of these troops continued to maintain loyalty to their ethnic Nuer Commanders including Riek Machar. On the other hand, the SPLA also consists of professional soldiers mainly from Dinka tribe and other tribes including also Nuer who are loyal to Salva Kiir as the legitimate Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the SPLA. Therefore, when the political dispute within the SPLM translated into fighting , consciously or unconsciously, the two groups found themselves in opposite sides fighting each other and trading accusations and counter-accusations mainly that the Dinka massacred Nuer in Juba and more precisely in Munuki 107 residential Area and that the Dinka were massacred in Bor, Akobo, Bentiu, and Malakal. Initial reports of ethnic massacres seem to have been the reason why at the early stage the conflict quickly assumed an ethnic dimension although the two fighting forces deny this. It is this ethnic dimension of the conflict which is most worrying and if not resolved could lead to national calamity with genocide a possibility given the fact that both the Nuer and Dinka are large groups with heavily armed groups.

3. Loss of Control *over* Fighting Forces

3.1. The Government

Following the eruption of fighting among the soldiers of the Tiger battalion the fighting quickly assumed an ethnic dimension and loss of control of the fighting groups. There were reports that a section of the security forces began targeting the Nuer living in Juba. It is generally believed that some elements in the security forces went to Nuer homes around Juba and rounded up the Nuer and killed them. An eyewitness reported seeing entire families being killed when Nuer soldiers were found hiding in those homes. Eyewitness account also sighted some Dinkas in uniform carrying out house-to-house search of the Nuer homes, and victimizing the occupants. The Commission also received reports of door to door search for members of the Nuer ethnic groups carried out in the then government held town of Malakal in Upper Nile State.

3.2. The Rebel Forces

The news of the killings of the Nuer living in Munuki 107 Residential Area in Juba quickly spread to Jonglei, Upper Nile and Unity states. The result was revenge attacks by the Nuer ethnic community against mainly the Dinka. In Bor, over 2, 000 people were reportedly killed the majority being women

and children. Civilians who had fled and taken residence in a church were killed including clergyman. Some patients admitted in the hospital were murdered in their hospital beds.

On 19th December, 2013 the Nuer ethnic militia, known as the “White Army” occupied Bor town. While in Bor, the White Army was reported to have committed atrocities against civilians regardless of their nationalities but specifically targeting the Dinka ethnic group. Some women were raped and some people were killed in the hospital. One female (Dinka) who said she survived the attacks had this to say:

“I was supposed to be raped but I told the perpetrator that I am too sick to sleep with a man”. It is better for you to kill me than to sleep with me”..... “If the Nuer people come back I will surely die” she concluded.

The Episcopal Church of the Sudan and South Sudan (ECS/ECSS) confirmed the killings in the church. It condemned the extra-judicial killings of civilians inside and within the church premises in Bor town. An eye-witness told the Commission that 32 people were killed and dumped in the compound of Leiudier Cathedral Church and 127 other bodies were found within the Bor Teaching Hospital. Among the victims were 10 children who were with their mothers in the hospital.

In Baliet County, Upper Nile State, over 200 people, mainly Dinkas were killed in a revenge attacks. Most of these were women, children and the aged. The Commission also has received reports of ethnic killings in Unity State. The Commission established that in that State rebel forces rounded up some Dinkas and killed them in public.

Ethnic tensions and hatred between the Nuer and Dinka was not encountered among the fighting forces only. The SSHRC was able to establish that within the UN Camps where Nuer and Dinka civilians had sought refuge, there are tensions between the two groups occasionally manifesting into fights between the two groups. The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), in a statement dated 18th February, 2014 confirmed that “inter-communal clashes flared up (in Bor) within the Protection of Civilians site,” where nearly 22,000 people have sought protection at their compound, including members of both the Dinka and Nuer ethnic groups.

Such killings as explained above manifested the fact that there was loss of control over forces by the government and rebel force commanders respectively. That was the time in which the Dinka-Nuer ethnic dimension of the conflict was visibly seen in the first week of the conflict, though it was later controlled by the leaders of the fighting forces.

4. Human Rights violations

4.1. Right to Life

The eruption of fighting in Juba on 15th December which quickly spread to Jonglei, unity and Upper Nile States has led to mass violations of human rights. Generally the human rights situation has been grossly affected by the fighting. The level of killings that has occurred between 15th December 2013 and 15th March 2014 which is the cut off point for this report, has been extremely high and

unacceptable. Estimates by various sources have so far put the number of deaths attributed to the fighting as being over 10,000 people countrywide. It is therefore apparent that the result of the conflict and fighting by government and the rebel forces has resulted in gross violations of the right to life of not only combatants but also of innocent and defenceless civilians including children, women, and the vulnerable.

4.2. Killings in Juba

The Commission team did establish that between 16th and 18th December over 600 people mainly Nuer ethnic group were killed and more than 800 wounded in Juba and its suburbs. On 5th, March, 2014 fighting broke out in Juba among the Army commando ranks. This left over 35 soldiers' dead and at least six civilians killed in the areas around the military barracks. In Hai Game, one of the Juba residential areas, a twelve year old child by name Elinama Charles Mako was killed at around 5: 00 pm by a stray bullet from the fighting. An eye witness told the Commission that the killings in December 2014 were committed by mainly use of weapons.

4.3. Killings in Upper Nile State

It has not been possible for the Commission to verify the number of people who have lost their lives due to the conflict in the Upper Nile State. However, an eye-witness from Malakal reported to SSHRC Officers on 13th January, 2014 and told the officers that 200 civilians mostly children, women and the aged who tried to cross the Nile by ferry following news of an imminent attack on Malakal town, died when the ferry capsized. In addition, on 15th February 2014, SSHRC officers were told by chiefs and Baliet County Authorities that at least 240 civilians were killed in Baliet County by rebels. It is important to note here that Baliet County of Upper Nile State is mainly inhabited by Dinka ethnic community and that rebels in Upper Nile are Nuer dominated and therefore the killings could have had an ethnic dimension.

Upper Nile State has been the ground for continued fighting between Government and rebel forces. Following the second round of negotiations between the government and the rebels in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in the first week of February 2014, there were attacks and counter attacks by both parties despite the cessation of hostilities Agreement signed on January 23, 2014. Since then, the State has been experiencing violence that has resulted in loss of lives, massive displacement of the civil population and destruction of property. By the time of the writing of this report, Upper Nile Authorities including the state Governor's Office announced the relocation of the state capital to Renk town on the border with the Sudan, largely because the state capital of Malakal is in the control of rebels. So far the Commission is unable to accurately establish over the number of people who were killed including wounded ones because Malakal changed hands between the rebels and government forces.

4.4. Killings in Warrap State

On 1st January, 2014 SSHRC officers established that at least 42 people were killed following an attack on two separate areas in Tonj North County, Warrap State of which 35 of the victims were confirmed to be women, children and elderly people from Juer, Alabek Payam. In this attack, about 10 people

were wounded. In another attack, at Keng Payam/Buma seven people were killed and 21 others injured. On 14th January, 2014, rebels attacked Kongar area of Alik Payam killing four people on the spot, a girl was injured and about 300 herds of cattle were stolen. On 17th January, 2014 rebels attacked Apuk Padoc of Akok Payam killing two persons, and looting over 250 cattle. On 31st January, 2014 rebels attacked Lou Ariik of Alabek Payam killing 66 people, wounding 120 persons and looting 900 herds of cattle. Below is a table showing a record of casualties and properties stolen due to fighting in Warrap State.

Table -1:

| Date | Lives Lost | Injured | Cattle Looted | Payam/Boma |
|--------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1/1/2014 | 42 | 10 | - | Tonj North |
| 1/1/2014 | 7 | 21 | - | Keng |
| 14/1/2014 | 4 | 1 | 300 | Kongor (Alik County) |
| 17/1/2014 | 2 | - | 300 | Apuk Padoc (Akok Payam) |
| 31/1/2014 | 66 | 120 | 900 | Lou Ariik (Alabek Payam) |
| Total | 121 | 152 | 1500 | |

4.5. Destruction of Property

The right to property is protected under the South Sudan Transitional Constitution and international law. Therefore, in such conflict situations all parties to the conflict have the constitutional and legal obligation to respect and protect the right to property. The consequences of the current conflict between the government and the rebels have been very devastating. There have been widespread destructions and looting of property in five states of South Sudan; namely Jonglei, Unity, Upper Nile and to some extent Central Equatoria and Warrap. The Commission has established that the property destroyed include government institutions, premises/offices and property belonging to non-governmental organizations and financial institutions, private homes, shops, vehicles, herds of cattle among others. The visible examples of destructions to property can be seen in the towns of Bor in Jonglei state, Bentiu in Unity state and Malakal in Upper Nile state. The Commission established that there have been widespread destruction of education and health facilities in the war affected areas. For example the Universities of Upper Nile, and Dr. John Garang including the entire basic and secondary education

facilities were destroyed, burnt, looted or shut down for security reasons. In some of those areas, education or the learning process has been completely interrupted.

4.6. Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

Preliminary assessment and review of literatures done by the Commission on the number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) is very alarming. Thousands of persons have sought and obtained refuge in UNMISS compounds in Juba, Bor, Malakal and Bentiu. Others have sought safety in other locations including in the bushes. It has not been possible on account of security concerns for the Commission to fully carry out an assessment of the conditions and numbers of persons displaced internally by the fighting. The IDPs however live under difficult conditions. They lack or have inadequate access to basic needs such as shelter, food, clean drinking water and essential drugs. Children are being denied basic education on account of the massive displacements in some areas of Juba, Jonglei, Upper Nile, and Unity States.

Table -2: Distribution of some IDPs locations and their population sizes above 10,000 IDP

| Location | N0 of IDPs |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| Minkamon | 74,000 |
| Wau Shiluk | 45,000 |
| Nimule | 35,000 |
| Delthoma | 34,000 |
| Rubkuey | 32,000 |
| Jampiang | 22,000 |
| Torit | 11,000 |
| Ganyiel | 10,500 |

5. Consequences of the conflict on South Sudan

5.1. The human rights situation in the Country

Before the outbreak of the current conflict, there were improvements in the human rights records in the country after the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). Democratic Institutions including the human rights Commission were established. There were commendable degree of respect

to human rights and fundamental freedoms. In an assessment done by the Commission in November 2013, the army and the police generally had improved on protection, and respect for human rights. However, the recent conflict has resulted in major setbacks in the areas of human rights protection and respect for fundamental rights such as right to life. Notable atrocities that have been committed on a wide scale include extra-judicial killing, arbitrary arrests in some areas, rape associated with persons in uniform is on increase, culture of impunity is widespread on account of the conflict situation, recruitment of people including children (notably White Army) into the fighting forces by both government and the rebels are in progress. Media freedoms and freedom of speech have been scaled down. For example, talks-show programs on Miraya FM on issues connected to human rights, governance and Rule of Law and other social issues were voluntarily suspended. The relationship between the government and some local media houses has also deteriorated with the Government accusing them of incitement and promoting the image of the rebels in their broadcasts. Children's rights to education in war affected areas is deprived, rights to free movement are limited, livelihood has been disrupted and in many places people have been reduced to absolute dependence undermining their pride and dignity.

5.2. Ethnicity and tribalism

Whatever the cause, reason or justification, the present conflict has rekindled and inflamed ethnic and tribal hatred to certain extent, to xenophobic levels particularly amongst the two numerically big tribes, the Nuer and the Dinka. Though consistently denied and rejected by politicians, leaders or propagandists of both sides of the conflict, this is a reality that the Commission has noted to be obtaining on the ground. This reality is what has created the ethnic dimension of the conflict and cannot be wished away. It is extremely important therefore, that both parties to conflict admit to this reality and that it is a factor that requires attention with a view to finding a suitable solution through the negotiation process.

5.3 .Human rights, Democracy and fundamental freedoms

The Transitional Constitution of South Sudan (TCSS 2011) provides that; “South Sudan is founded on justice, equality, respect for human dignity and advancement of human rights and fundamental freedoms” [Article. 1 (5)]. This demonstrates the aspirations of the South Sudan people.

In a democratic society, political parties are one of the actors instrumental in fostering the democratic process in a given country. They represent various views, opinions and aspirations within the society. It

is to be noted herein that the war has totally interrupted if not put to a halt the democratic process in the country. For example the election programme for the general elections in 2015 is now in jeopardy despite the establishment of the Elections Commission and appointment of the Commissioners thereto. The South Sudan political parties so far have not been registered despite enactment of Political Parties Act. With ongoing violent conflict and ethnic divide and tensions the democratic process in South Sudan is at stake, given the fact that; (a) the Census scheduled for 2014 may not be conducted owing also to the current political situation in the country, (b) financial crisis that has hit the country for more than one and half years, (c) insecurity in the larger areas of greater Upper Nile which will hinder civic education activities and (d) a slow constitution making process due to financial constraints being encountered by the National Constitution Review Commission (NCRC). Furthermore, the development of the democratic process is being undermined by the closure of the democratic institutions such as State parliaments thus affecting development programs and national reconciliation and healing processes. Even at national level, some of the members of the National Legislature joined the rebellion adding to a lack of representation in their respective constituencies in the National Legislature.

5.4. Political detainees and judicial proceedings

Following the December 15, 2013 Juba fighting that divided public opinion as to whether this was a coup D'état or a mutiny or both, some military officers and eleven SPLM political figures were arrested and detained by the Government on the reasons that they had planned, organized and perpetrated a failed coup. However contrary to the constitutional provisions the suspects were detained for a very long time and were not brought to court until 11th March 2014 since their arrest on the 16th of December 2013. The investigation process took quite long with government justifying the delay as necessary given the complexity of the alleged offences. Initially, the delay in the investigation subsequently leading to the trial process had raised concern of the Commission. Similarly, intervention of Kenya and release of seven out of eleven detainees who were taken out of the country by President Kenyatta was unprecedented and very unusual which the Commission considered as undermining the authority of South Sudan in conducting its judicial process.

On March 11, 2014, the remaining four detainees namely: Pagan Amum former SPLM Secretary General, Oyai Deng Ajak former National Security Minister in the Office of the President, Majak D' Agot former Deputy Defence Minister and Ambassador Ezekiel Lol were produced before Juba High Court, Central Equatoria state under heavy security deployment. The four accused are charged under Chapter V of the Penal Code Act 2008 on offences of treason, concealing treason, subverting constitutional government, insurgency, publishing and or communicating false statements prejudicial to South Sudan and undermining authority of or insulting president among others. It is to be noted that this is the first trial that court of independent South Sudan is hearing. Needed therefore is a conducive

environment provided to both the presiding judge and defence lawyers far away from any kind of intimidation or interference that would defeat purpose of justice.

6. Accountability

On account of the gross human rights violations both the South Sudan Constitution and international law require that the violations are investigated, perpetrators or instigators are identified and held accountable for the violations. The Government and the rebel leadership bear equal responsibility to ensure that effective investigations into the atrocities are conducted without hindrance. It is for these reasons, that the Commission welcomes the appointment of the African Union (AU) independent Commission of Inquiry under the leadership of President Olusegun Obasanjo former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The Commission hopes that the team will receive all needed support and that they will have unfettered consultations with all human rights defenders including the SSHRC.

Regarding the killings that have taken place and were alleged to have been committed by Government forces the Commission welcomed the admission by the Government that some killings were ethnically motivated especially during the early part of the conflict in December, 2013. More importantly the Government went ahead and established committees to investigate into the killings of civilians. The Government also announced the arrest of 100 soldiers in connection with killings and human rights abuses but none of these have been prosecuted. However, it is unclear whether these alleged perpetrators had indeed been detained given the fact that following the incident of 5th of March the Army spokesperson announced that all the arrested officers escaped during the fighting among the ranks of the Commando Unit in Juba.

7. Recommendations

7.1. Government should:

- a) In particular put in place or strengthen protection measures for civilians in the states under declared state of emergency;
- b) Support the Investigation Committee formed by the president of the Republic to expedite the investigation process so as to produce report that would enable the government to try and prosecute perpetrators of human rights violations against civilians;
- c) Further Empower and support the SSHRC to carry out its constitutional mandate easily, especially in the areas of transport to enable it move quickly to the areas where human rights violations are committed;
- d) Commit fully to negotiating with rebels with a view to finding a peaceful political settlement to the current conflict;
- e) Respect and refrain its forces from violating human rights
- f) Provide security to allow humanitarian access to affected population

- g) apply Article 63 (d) and (f) of the Transitional Constitution, 2011 on loss of membership in the National Legislature so as to fill in vacancies to resolving problem of the power vacuum which is the most needles in these critical times. By so doing, it will solve problem of accumulated salaries, emoluments and other entitlements that may be claimed by the absentee members since they are not active representatives of their constituencies, thus ceiling off any potential claim demands before any court of law thereafter.
- h) Review with responsibility the UNMISS mandate in South Sudan and give a sincere and courageous recommendations to the UN Secretary General with a view to improving UNMISS-Government relationship.
- i) Provide conducive environment as well as financial support to Civil Society organizations to carry out Voice for Peace Campaigns (VPC) for peaceful coexistence
- j) Ensure that the court proceedings on the 4 accused persons are done in an environment conducive for a fair trial, far from any political or intimidating atmosphere such that the sitting judges and defense lawyers deliver justice.

7.2. Rebel Groups should:

- a) Respect the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement, laying down their arms and fully commit to the negotiation process with a view to reaching a peaceful and political settlement which is the only way to avoid violations of human rights.
- b) Respect and protect human rights and refrain from killing innocent civilians in areas that they control as witnessed in Bor, Jonglei state; Baliet and Malakal, Upper Nile state; and Bentiu, Unity state
- c) Refrain from destruction and looting of public and private institutions or property.
- d) Allow the members of civil society organizations particularly the church to carry message of peace to their areas of control and protect and consider them as messengers of peace, harmony, coexistence and promoters of human rights

7.3. UNMISS should:

- a) Continue working with the government to ensure protection of civilians in the war affected areas;
- b) Support and strengthen institutions of governance that promote rule of law and respect for human rights.

- c) Avoid further incidences like that of Rumbek where military hardware and ammunitions were discovered by security personnel thus creating mistrust on UNMISS mandate. In addition, UNMISS should hold those involved in such an incident accountable in transparent manner.

7.4 Other UN Agencies And International Community Should:

- a) Urge the government and the rebels to cease hostilities in favour of dialogue to reach a political settlement to the conflict;
- b) Persuade and assist the parties to the conflict to firmly commit themselves to implementing the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement signed in Addis Ababa on January 23, 2014;
- c) Provide technical and financial assistance to Civil Society organizations to carry out sensitization programs in favour of peace and coexistence;
- d) In their efforts to mobilizing support for South Sudan, should put development agenda or humanitarian aid as priority over any other interests that they may have.

8. Conclusion

This is an interim report pending a fuller a more detailed report in the Commission's next Annual Report. The Commission however wishes to stress that violence and military violence that erupted in Juba on 15th of December, 2014 and spread to other parts of the country has set the country back from its efforts to guarantee respect and promotion of the human rights of its people. The Commission has noted with great concern the large number of civilians and combatants killed as well as atrocities that have been committed as a consequence of the internal fighting that has been going on. It is exceptionally high number of atrocities and killings occurring within a short time compared to that of the long period of the liberation struggle.

The Commission would like to conclude this report by reemphasizing its message aired on Radio Miraya at the onset of these conflicts: it urges both parties to this conflict to prioritize the interest of the people of South Sudan; they should also recognize that the best and final solution to this problem is not military but political through dialogue, negotiation and ensuring that the solutions reached respects the will of the people through a democratic process.