

**UPR Adoption – South Sudan
March 2017**

Five years after independence, South Sudan is mired in a highly abusive and increasingly complex civil war that does not appear set to end soon despite earlier signs that the fragile 2015 peace agreement might hold. Instead, the government has continued to allow its forces to carry out serious abuses during operations across the country. Both sides have blocked humanitarian assistance to people in need, and the UN declared famine in parts of Unity state in February. Armed soldiers have attacked humanitarian sites including UN protection sites, refugee camps, and international aid compounds.

Conflict and abuses have forced more than 3 million to flee their homes and hundreds of thousands of people have sought refuge in neighboring countries because they are afraid for their safety.

The government of South Sudan has also become increasingly intolerant and repressive, violently targeting real or perceived opponents, often along ethnic lines. National security officials arbitrarily arrest politicians, members of civil society and journalists for extended periods, sometimes years. The government continues to implement the death penalty and has yet to ratify many key human rights treaties, despite receiving countless recommendations to do so during the UPR this past November.

As a matter of great urgency, the government should immediately stop all unlawful attacks on civilians and investigate and prosecute all alleged violations particularly with respect to sexual violence, which has featured in this conflict time and again. The government should also accept recommendations Human Rights Watch and others have made to end the abuses in the current conflict and create conditions conducive for return of displaced people.

Accountability is key to ending the violence and abuses. To this end, South Sudan should proactively support the establishment of the envisioned hybrid court and show concrete progress in holding its own abusive forces to account for human rights violations committed across the country.

South Sudan's government should also end its repressive practices, releasing detainees and ordering security officials to cease all harassment of independent civil society. And it should also implement recommendations to review and reform key laws and abusive institutions, such as the National Security Service, and ratify human rights treaties.