

Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada

NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations

Organization: Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada
Item: Item 4: Enhanced Interactive Dialogue with Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan (oral update)
Date: 23 September 2021
Speaker: Paul Scambler

Oral Statement to the 48th Session of the UN Human Rights Council from Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada (LRWC), NGO in special consultative status

South Sudan: Widespread human rights violations against human rights defenders

Madam President,

Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada thanks the Commission for its oral report. We are deeply concerned by the continued pattern of widespread human rights violations against human rights defenders in South Sudan, including repression of their rights to freedom of expression, association, and peaceful assembly.

South Sudan has still not investigated or ensured accountability for the 2017 disappearances and murders of human rights lawyer Dong Samuel Luak and opposition politician Aggrey Idri. Both were kidnapped from Nairobi in January 2017 by South Sudan's National Security Service (NSS). In 2019 the UN Panel of Experts on South Sudan found it "highly probable" that they were executed at an NSS training facility on January 30, 2017.¹

Recent reports indicate continued government targeting of defenders inside and outside the country.² We note with further alarm the increase in arbitrary arrests and other measures to prevent civil society from organizing peaceful protests.³

We ask the Council to urge South Sudan to ensure a halt to all human rights violations, including extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, arbitrary arrests, torture, and indiscriminate violence against defenders, and to carry out prompt, impartial, and independent investigations of all reported cases, holding suspected perpetrators accountable in fair trials.

Thank you, Madam President.

¹ Final report of the Panel of Experts on South Sudan, April 9, 2019, <https://www.undocs.org/S/2019/301>.

² Frontline Defenders, "No Refuge: South Sudan's Targeting of Refugee HRDs Outside the Country", March 2021, https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/sites/default/files/no_refuge_-_final.pdf

³ Amnesty International, "South Sudan: We are at risk and on the run", July 17, 2019, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr65/0692/2019/en/>; Amnesty International, "South Sudan: End new wave of repression against peaceful protests", September 3, 2021, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/09/south-sudan-end-new-wave-of-repression-against-peaceful-protests/>