



UNMISS Human Rights Division

UNMISS Human Rights Division (UNMISS HRD) represents the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in South Sudan.

Our core activities include:

- Monitoring, investigating, verifying, and reporting on human rights violations and abuses, as well as violations of international humanitarian law, including conflict-related sexual violence; and
- Contribute to enhancing the capacity of national stakeholders to create a conducive environment for the enhanced protection of civilians and transparent, inclusive, and genuine consultation in relation to transitional justice, constitutional-making and electoral processes.



Introducing UNMISS HRD Publications:

A message from the UNMISS HRD Director, Musa Yerro Gassama

It is a pleasure to introduce the first edition of UNMISS HRD Publications. This edition is mainly focused on



Dr. Musa Yerro Gassama, Director UNMISS Human Rights Division (HRD) and Representative of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in South Sudan

the technical assistance and capacity-building support provided by the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) Human Rights Division (HRD) in collaboration with UNMISS Sections, components, members of U.N. Country Team, and partners to the Government of South Sudan, national human rights institutions, civil society organizations, and other national and local stakeholders during the period January to December 2022.

The overall objective of the technical assistance and capacity-building activities is to enhance the capacity of national stakeholders to contribute to promotion and protection of human rights in South Sudan. The support provided to the Government and other stakeholders helps mainstream human rights into peace and political processes, enable and empower national institutions and actors to enhance greater protection of civilians, accountability, and enhance civic space, including freedom of expression. The technical assistance also promotes a human rights-based approach to national reconciliation, development, and humanitarian assistance.

UNMISS HRD technical assistance and capacity-building activities have so far targeted three categories of stakeholders: the South Sudan People's Defense Forces (SSPDF), South Sudan National Police Services (SSNPS) and National Prison Services of South Sudan (NPSSS) and

line ministries. The security forces comprised 30 per cent of those who participated, while 16 per cent of participants were from civilian government offices. Thirty-seven per cent of activities conducted by UNMISS HRD were designed for civil society organizations, making them the largest audience to date. In this first edition of UNMISS HRD publications: "My dignity, my rights", we bring to you contributions that will have a positive impact in the long run, helping more people than ever to live fuller, happier lives in a society free from human rights violations and abuses.

We have entered an era where protection and respect for human rights are critical guardrails for human dignity and central to the pursuit of happiness by all. This step-by-step approach starts in each region and State and will ensure we do not lose sight of the people whose lives we may help transform.

This publication which covers the period from January to December 2022, presents an overview of the human rights situation in South Sudan and the main human rights challenges, and outlines the technical assistance and capacity-building support provided to the Government of South Sudan by the UNMISS HRD.



In line with its mandate, UNMISS HRD is contributing to national and local capacities for the protection and promotion of human rights through sustained engagement, workshops, trainings, sensitization, and high-level advocacy targeting varied national stakeholders and the public.



Training of SSNPS officials in Bentiu Unity State

Methodology: How we work

UNMISS HRD work is based on information on human rights violations, and abuses, and violations of international humanitarian law gathered and verified by the UNMISS HRD through its headquarters in the capital, Juba, 12 field offices in 10 States and several investigation missions. Sources of information include victim and eyewitness accounts and observations by human rights officers, as well as accounts from secondary sources, including service providers, local and national authorities, community leaders and civil society organizations. The UNMISS HRD findings are

based on information that has been documented and corroborated in accordance with OHCHR methodology. The overview of the human rights situation should not be considered exhaustive, given the challenges encountered in monitoring and reporting on violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, including limited access to various locations owing to security considerations, denials of access and the inaccessibility of some locations due to road conditions. Information on technical assistance is based on direct engagement with the

Government of South Sudan and other stakeholders at the national and State level and on projects implemented by the Human Rights Division in cooperation with other UNMISS components, as well as United Nations agencies, including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). These activities were undertaken based on identified capacity gaps articulated in 2021 needs assessment for capacity-building and technical assistance of the Government, the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, and the human rights challenges.



How we Engage Government in Public Reporting

According to U.N. Security Council resolution 2677 (2023) and previous resolutions, UNMISS HRD is required to monitor, investigate, verify, and report immediately, publicly, and regularly on abuses and violations of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law, including those that may amount to war crimes or crimes against humanity. The reports are released to the public, including through the media. Regular public reporting is one of the essential functions of human rights monitoring, as it constitutes an important means of recording and analyzing trends and developments in the human rights situation over time and advocating action to end, prevent or remedy violations. In addition to the incident and other ad hoc reports, -mainly following a major clashes, the two main periodic public reports produced by UNMISS HRD are the quarterly and annual briefs that present an overview of trends in violence affecting civilians across South Sudan. Before preparing and releasing a public report, UNMISS HRD considers the objectives to be achieved, the timeliness of the report and its potential impact on the human rights situation and the implementation of the UNMISS



mandate. The procedure established by UNMISS, and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights is to engage the Government before releasing the report. In this regard, UNMISS HRD shares an advance copy of its public reports with the Government, inviting them to submit factual comments within a reasonable time frame (normally between 10 days and two weeks) on the understanding that comments will be considered appropriately. If the Government provides relevant factual comments and information, UNMISS HRD will incorporate them in the report or attach them as an annex.



Dr Musa Yerro Gassama, UNMISS HRD Director Presenting the Technical Assistance and Capacity Building Report on South Sudan on the 31st of March 2023 at the 52nd Session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva Switzerland. Photo: OHCHR

The U.N. Human Rights Council resolution 49/35

On 1 April 2022, the Human Rights Council adopted resolution 49/35 on technical assistance and capacity-building for South Sudan. In that resolution, the Council requested the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), in cooperation with the Government of South Sudan and relevant mechanisms of the African Union, to urgently assist South Sudan in addressing human rights challenges in the post-conflict transition by providing the Government with the necessary technical and capacity-building support, per the terms of the resolution. The Council also requested OHCHR to present a comprehensive report to the Council at its fifty-second session on the support provided to the Government, to be followed by an interactive dialogue.



Overview:

Main human rights challenges

The human rights situation in South Sudan remained of grave concern, despite an observed decrease in the number of civilians affected by violence, largely attributed to a decline in major incidents of localized violence. Attacks and targeting of civilians by the parties to the conflict and intercommunal clashes persisted in various locations across South Sudan, resulting in human rights violations and abuses and violations of international humanitarian law. In 2022, the Human Rights Division documented 3,469 civilian casualties (2,334 men, 644 women and 491 children): 1,600 killed, 988 injured, 501 abducted and 380 victims of conflict-related sexual violence. This represents an increase of 2 per cent in the number of Victims compared to 2021 when 3,414 civilian victims were recorded. In total, 47 per cent of civilian casualties (1,642) were attributed to community-based militias and self-defense groups; parties to the conflict were responsible for 48 per cent (1,674) of all casualties; and the remaining 5 per cent (153) were attributed to opportunistic violence. South Sudan: Overall casualty figures from January to December 2022.



Following a request from the Government of South Sudan on the identified needs for technical assistance and capacity-building of the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity of the Republic of South Sudan, submitted to OHCHR and the Human Rights Council in November 2021, UNMISS HRD, in collaboration with other components of UNMISS and many national stakeholders, undertook a mapping exercise to ascertain the technical assistance and capacity-building support to address those needs.

The identified areas of the intervention included: capacity-building on international human rights law and international humanitarian law, criminal investigation, and professional ethics; training on prison services; and technical assistance on legislative reform, including on drafting of the bill to establish the Commission

On Truth, Reconciliation and Healing. Other areas identified in consultations with beneficiaries included: training on child protection and gender main human rights in South Sudan; and to the rule of law institutions to promote access to justice and accountability. Technical and logistical support was also provided to the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, including by facilitating transportation of the technical committee of the Commission on Truth, Reconciliation and Healing to all 10 States to conduct nationwide public consultations.

During the reporting period, UNMISS HRD, in collaboration with relevant UNMISS components South Sudan. Such country-

Main achievements in capacity-building and technical cooperation



Military Officials from the South Sudan Peoples Defence Forces (SSPDF) attending UNMISS HRD Event at Nyakuron Cultural Center, Juba in Juba. Photo: UNMISS HRD



The Commemoration of the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict (IDESV) in Morobo Town, Morobo County, on 14 June 2022



NGO partners, during a sensitization radio talk show at Voice of Hope Radio Wau, Western Bahr el Ghazal

wide interactions have increased the knowledge and abilities of participants in the field of human rights, as well as the national capacity and that of the States in promoting and protecting human rights. The initiatives also contributed to the strengthening and expanding local alert networks of the Human Rights Division, resulting in greater and more timely dissemination of early warning and human-rights-related information.

In addition, 31 public awareness-raising segments, moderated by panels of experts from civil society organizations and Government partners, were aired on Radio Miraya as

part of the "Know Your Rights" talk show. The radio segments addressed a range of themes, such as the role of civil society organizations in advocating the protection and prevention of violence against women and girls in South Sudan, the role of the Government and civil society organizations in the implementation of transitional justice initiatives in South Sudan; the protection of victims and survivors of human rights violations; accountability for perpetrators of human rights violations; and the role of the necessary unified forces in the protection and promotion of human rights. The programming has had a substantial

impact, enhancing the awareness of South Sudanese communities of human rights issues of concern and their capacity to participate constructively in the protection and promotion of human rights, as well as promoting the exchange of early warning information with UNMISS to aid in the prevention of human rights violations.

Addressing Conflict-related Sexual Violence(CRSV)

Conflict-related sexual violence continued to be committed in various locations in South Sudan. The information gathered by the Human Rights Division indicates that sexual violence in the form of rape and gang rape of women and girls was used as a method/strategy of warfare. The Human Rights Division documented 380 victims of conflict-related sexual violence (2 men, 272 women, 105 girls and one boy), a sharp increase compared to the number of victims in 2021 (194 victims). Parties to the

conflict and their affiliated armed groups were responsible for most documented cases. As part of continued efforts to facilitate the implementation of commitments by the parties to the conflict to effectively prevent and respond to CRSV in South Sudan, HRD/Woman Protection Advisory unit. (WPAU) continued to provide technical assistance to the Joint Implementation Committee (JIC) towards an effective implementation of the "Action Plan for the Armed Forces on Addressing CRSV in South Sudan" signed in January 2021.



Meeting with the Joint Implementation Committee (JIC) members and UNMISS Senior Women's Protection Advisor



'Never again to CRSV' says a community – it is a serious human rights violation

"My name is S.J. I was abducted in 2016 on the road to Lirangu and taken into the bush. When I was abducted, several men raped me... When I had the opportunity to escape, I did not hesitate to do so... When I came back to my community, some of the community members called me the chief's wife. I have two children and I don't know their fathers and it is difficult to send them to school..."



These words from S.J survivor of Conflict-related Sexual Violence (CRSV), echo in our heads. Her life changed forever because of a heinous act, causing a heavy impact on her children and herself. Survivors can't restore their lives to what it was before being subjected to CRSV. CRSV destroys the lives of survivors and affects everyone related to them. Within this context, the E.U.-funded project for holistic survivor assistance, implemented by UNMISS Women Protection Advisory Unit (WPAU)/HRD with the support of an implementing partner in Western Equatoria, becomes very relevant.

The E.U.-funded project aims to empower 195 women and girls subjected to CRSV in Western Equatoria during the armed conflict in the region and victims of politically instigated intercommunal violence in Tambura from 2016 to 2018. The project follows a survivor-centered



Ms. Pramila Patten, Special Representative of the UN Secretary General on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict and Ms. Sheila Beedwantee Keetharuth the UNMISS Senior Women Protection Adviser during Ms. Patten's country visit to South Sudan from 18-21 October 2022 Credit: Rights for Peace South Sudan

approach, with interventions tailored to suit the needs of each survivor, including livelihood support activities. Under this project, survivor assistance and rehabilitation are seen as important activities to eradicate CRSV and attempts to reduce its impact, with the full involvement of the community in addressing various other

factors, such as practices that do not treat the issue as a serious violation, dealing with stigma and rehabilitation, accepting the survivors and their children back within the fold. It is expected that under the project, survivors will be sufficiently empowered to recover from the experience of conflict-related sexual violence, captivity, or other abuses suffered, to ultimately contribute to the creation of an enabling, stigma-free environment conducive to their full reintegration into their communities, ensuring their economic independence through livelihood activities.

During her recent visit to South Sudan in October 2022, Ms Pramila Patten, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict (SRSG-SVC), paid a visit to Yambio to meet with survivors and to appraise herself of lessons learned during implementation which could inform future similar projects in other locations. It is worth noting that the project has created considerable awareness of the need to support survivors in Western Equatoria, generating a positive community response. At the same time, leaders have recognized that communities have a fundamental role as a support network to respond to and prevent CRSV. Experience has shown that community support is among the critical factors required in the healing process of survivors and their children. CRSV perpetrated against male community members is a topic that tends to be avoided in South Sudan, as it is a highly stigmatizing issue. Many male survivors have either refrained from or never had the opportunity to seek support, thus reliving their trauma in the long run. UNMISS HRD Women protection advisory unit work with partners to ensure that all survivors can access support in Western Equatoria and CRSV hotspots in South Sudan. In South Sudan, CRSV has been a characteristic of the conflict. The time to take decisive action is NOW - to heal affected communities and resolve "NEVER AGAIN"!



Civic Space and Participation



“We believe that civil society organizations play a critical role in monitoring human rights violations,” said a Human Rights Officer working with the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) in Wau. The human rights officer was speaking at a capacity-building session facilitated by the UN Peacekeeping mission for 25 representatives from various civil society groups, including six women. Photo by Dawit K. Tedla/UNMISS.

The legitimate exercise of the right to freedom of opinion and expression and effective civic participation in public life remains challenging in South Sudan. At the national level, UNMISS HRD advocated accountability for human rights violations and abuses committed against human rights defenders, journalists and media practitioners with the Government of South Sudan, including the Ministry of Information, Communication and Postal Services and the Media Authority. The UNMISS/HRD also engaged with civil society organizations, the South Sudan Human Rights Commission, human rights defenders and media practitioners to promote and protect civic space and participation and provide technical support to initiatives encouraging civic space and participation. UNMISS HRD provided technical assistance to the South Sudan Human Rights Defenders Network to strengthen its civic space and protection work. In addition, it aided the Union of Journalists in South Sudan in conducting awareness-raising seminars on fundamental human rights norms and principles, including pertinent legislative frameworks protecting press freedom, reaching 220 media professionals (155 men and 65 women) from five States (Northern Bahr el-Ghazal, Eastern Equatoria, Unity, Upper Nile and Western Equatoria).

Rule of Law, Accountability and Transitional Justice

In addition to other initiatives, the U.N. Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) established an accountability working group tasked with implementing its accountability strategy to support the rule of law institutions, promote accountability, and access to justice to advance accountability in South Sudan. The strategy's

objective is to improve coordination with all justice system actors and provide strategic guidance to the United Nations and its national and state-level counterparts regarding enhancing accountability mechanisms. The UNMISS accountability working group in Juba, in coordination with UNDP and other partners, continued to advocate and support the deployment of mobile



A Quick Impact Project funded by UNMISS and implemented by a local partner has given a boost to the justice system in Lakes state. Credit Nina Zubovic Vignjevic/UNMISS

courts, joint special mobile courts, and court martials in various locations, including Bentiu, Malakal, Yambio, and Yei, to address the lack of functional judicial systems in certain states. The deployment of tribunals has facilitated the administration of justice to some victims of human rights violations and atrocities, including survivors of CRSV.

UNMISS HRD leveraged six quick impact projects to enhance the infrastructure and administration of justice in various locations. With the assistance of UNMISS, the Rumbek Public Prosecutor's Office in Lakes State was renovated, and the Rumbek High Court was furnished with solar panels, batteries, and ventilation fans, thereby enhancing working conditions.

Similarly, in Juba, the UNMISS/HRD sponsored the construction of two quick impact projects in Lainya county, Central Equatorial State: a magistrate court facility in Lainya centre and a police station in Kupera Payam. In Yambio, the Division supported building a prison in Ibba County and the renovation of the Maridi County court.



Building peace through promoting inclusive and participatory transitional justice processes and mechanisms in South Sudan

To facilitate the implementation of transitional justice mechanisms, the Human Rights Division, in collaboration with OHCHR headquarters, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), has initiated a joint project entitled "Building peace through promoting inclusive and participatory transitional justice processes and mechanisms

in South Sudan" with funding from the Peacebuilding Fund. The project aims to strengthen accountability for current and past human rights violations through interventions that promote truth, healing, and reconciliation and to address the legacies of massive human rights violations by implementing inclusive, transparent, gender-sensitive, and with victims at the centre of all solutions.



Participants during UNMISS HRD's Training for CSOs

A Victim-centred Approach to Transitional Justice Mechanisms



UNMISS HRD consultations on Transitional Justice with women leaders and community members.

To foster a victim-centred approach to transitional justice mechanisms, the Human Rights Division devised the "Breaking the Circle of Violence" programme to enable local stakeholders to participate effectively in transitional justice mechanisms. UNMISS HRD also provided financial and technical assistance to the Dialogue and Research Institute, a local civil society organization, to implement the programme in Jonglei and Unity States. Since its inception, a total of 3,000 (1,531 female and 1,469 male) victims, survivors, and witnesses of human rights violations and abuses have participated in engagements and received training on the truth-telling process outlined by the Commission for Truth, Reconciliation, and Healing and the content and significance of chapter V of the Revitalized Agreement to the achievement of peace in South Sudan. Eleven direct victims were identified as recipients of targeted relief and recovery efforts.



Technical Support to the Nationwide Public Consultations on the Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing

In preparation for the nationwide public consultations on the Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing conducted in May, the UNMISS/HRD provided training and technical advice to the Transitional Justice Working Group to streamline its activities and identify



Consultations on CRTH in Bentiu Unity State

priorities for advocacy and engagement on Chapter V of the Revitalized Agreement, including review of its transitional justice strategic plan.

From 6 to 30 May, with technical, financial, and logistical support from UNDP and UNMISS/HRD through the project supported through the Peacebuilding Fund, the technical committee members appointed by the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs conducted public consultations in all 10 States. Before the State-level consultations, the UNMISS/HRD and UNDP, through the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, conducted preparatory activities with the technical committee, including coordination meetings and training sessions on human rights, international criminal justice, the Revitalized Peace Agreement, the transitional justice mechanisms of chapter V of the Revitalized Agreement and consultation skills. UNDP supported the production of questionnaires and promotional materials, as well as the hiring venues and vehicles, while the UNMISS/HRD, through UNMISS flights, facilitated the transportation of technical committee teams to their respective States.

Participants in the consultations included State-level Government officials, representatives of State legislative assemblies, political parties, county authorities, civil society organizations, faith-based organizations, the media and the business community, persons with disabilities, traditional leaders, elders, women, youth, internally displaced persons and members of the armed forces and armed groups. They were conducted through focus group discussions, town hall meetings, and individual interviews. To ensure the participation of survivors of human rights violations and abuses in the consultations, the technical committee specifically sought the participation of survivor groups in Bor (Jonglei State) and Yei (Central Equatoria State).





Members of the Diplomatic Corp, Partners and CSOs representatives attending the 11th National Human Rights Forum organized by UNMISS HRD focusing on Socio-Economic Rights and Access to basic services in South Sudan on 10 November 2022.

The survivor groups were sensitized and trained by the Dialogue and Research Institute on the substance and importance of the Technical Committee and were encouraged to participate in the Consultations.

While the consultations progressed well in most targetted locations and were conducted in a free and conducive environment, coordination, logistics, security, and environmental constraints hindered progress in key counties. Due to insecurity, consultations could not be held in parts of the Abyei Administrative Area, Eastern Equatoria State and Western Bahr El-Ghazal State. The technical committee did not gain access to the areas controlled by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-Army in Opposition in the Greater Baggari region of Western Bahr El-Ghazal, and hostilities between the Dinka Bor and the local community in Magwi county did not permit consultations in the Magwi county headquarters and Nimule town. Furthermore, the technical committee team was limited in number to cover the large cities of Central Equatoria State, and ongoing conflict between the Twic Dinka and Dinka Ngok hindered consultations in the Abyei Administrative Area.

In Juba, UNMISS HRD, in collaboration with the South Sudan Human Rights Commission, facilitated two meetings of the National Human Rights Forum, which brought together a wide range of stakeholders from the Government, the diplomatic corps and civil society in February and November, and focused on challenges in the administration of justice and the realization of economic, social, and cultural rights.



The South Sudan Human Rights Commission subsequently published reports on the findings of its investigations that were used to advocate with national and State authorities to address human rights concerns and the protection of civilians. The technical guidance provided by the UNMISS HRD strengthened the capacity of the Commission to carry out its constitutional mandate, which includes monitoring, investigation and reporting of human rights violations across South Sudan.



UNMISS HRD staff members pictured with Commissioners from the South Sudan Human Rights Commission (SSHRC) in Rumbek Lakes State during Implementation of Joint Activities by UNMISS HRD and SSHRC.

State-level Human Rights Commissions

The human rights institutional architecture in South Sudan consists of the South Sudan Human Rights Commission,¹⁸ the State Human Rights Commissions,¹⁹ the National Human Rights Advisory Council²⁰ and the National Human Rights Forum. UNMISS HRD provided all human rights bodies with training and technical advice to enhance the protection and promotion of human rights. UNMISS HRD provided technical assistance and training to the Human Rights Commissions in Central Equatoria, Lakes, Western Bahr el-Ghazal and Upper Nile States on human rights monitoring, reporting, documentation, and advocacy, including the human rights obligations of South Sudan under international, regional and national laws and mechanisms.



The Honorable Benny Gideon, speaking on behalf of the South Sudan Human Rights Commission (SSHRC) Chairperson during Human Rights Day jointly organized by UNMISS HRD and SSHRC.

Technical Support to the Universal Periodic Review Process



UNMISS HRD facilitated a stakeholder reflection on the third cycle of the universal periodic review on South Sudan, which brought together a coalition of civil society organizations and an inter-ministerial committee. Key recommendations advanced during the review²² included raising awareness of the universal periodic review process among communities and local-level duty-bearers, developing relevant tools for monitoring the implementation of the recommendations presented, and engaging the South Sudan Human Rights Commission in the review process. By December, the major recommendations presented in the review to the Government of South Sudan were still under deliberation by the Council of Ministers. The Government is also in the process of developing a monitoring tool to help in implementing the recommendations.

UNMISS HRD provided technical guidance to the South Sudan Human Rights Commission on human rights documentation and reporting and logistical support to conduct independent human rights monitoring and investigations in Lakes and Warrap States in January, following reported allegations of human rights violations, including extrajudicial executions, and enforced disappearances.

UNMISS sensitizes national police counterparts in Eastern Equatoria on upholding human rights during pre-trial investigations

Fifty police officers from the country's National Police Service (SSNPS) participated in engaging sessions led by UNMISS HRD in Torit on pre-trial rights of suspected offenders, preventing conflict-related sexual violence; eschewing harmful cultural practices such as early or forced marriages; and upholding human rights. The participants said, "During my last inspection, I found 35 detainees and received a report from the Director of Prisons that there are 56 more remanded under investigation. Some have been detained for three weeks and others for a month, which contradicts human rights law," revealed by the Head of Legal Administration for Eastern Equatoria state. "This workshop, therefore, is very timely," he added. "For my part, I am encouraging UNMISS to print and supply booklets among school students so that they can understand the concept of human rights at a very young age," said a senior officer who participated in the training.



27 March 2023 Participants during UNMISS HRD Training on Human Rights Investigations in Torit Photos by Moses Yakudu/UNMISS EASTERN EQUATORIA



UNMISS encourages community leaders to become ambassadors against gender-based violence

WESTERN EQUATORIA- 60 community members in Sakure and Lirangu attended a one-day UNMISS HRD workshop on ending gender-based violence. A Sakure women's representative, was delighted to see that men made up half of the training participants. The day served as an eye-opener for police officer Sethe Daniel Khamis. "I have heard a great

deal of information that will be very useful in addressing cases of gender-based violence." "I learned about human rights and women's rights, which I had never heard of before," confessed the law enforcement officer. He added, "I believe we would benefit from greater awareness of this issue in Nzara County." a UN peacekeeping mission Human Rights Officer, is inclined to

concur. "As we travel throughout Western Equatoria State, we frequently observe that the vast majority of cases of gender-based violence are not even reported. "These incidents must be discussed and reported in order for communities to know how to respond when they occur," he explained. a member of the Western Equatoria State's Transitional Legislative Assembly, stated that perpetra-

tors must be held accountable once reported to the police and traditional authorities. "There is no room for impunity. "Those who commit these crimes must face the repercussions and not escape justice," she affirmed.



23 April 2023 Participants during the Workshop for CSOs. Photo by Felix Katie/UNMISS WESTERN

Civil Society in Tambura Trained on Human Rights by UNMISS HRD

UNMISS HRD facilitated training on monitoring and reporting human rights violations to representatives of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) from three counties, namely: Tambura, Ezo and Nagero in Western Equatoria, as part of continued efforts to create a conducive environment for credible elections and to consolidate the fragile security situation following the protracted conflict in Tambura, Western Equatoria. The participants said: "It was a long overdue training for me to learn about monitoring human rights violations because we have lived through them ourselves. They have become commonplace, unfortunately," said a participant from Ezo. "I believe every community member must be aware of their rights and ensure they are consistently upheld. Only by being fully educated about our rights will we be able to protect others. UNMISS has trained me, and now I have to train others," she added.

For another participant from Nagero, monitoring human rights is always difficult, but challenges can be mitigated with the right

skill set. "Thanks to this in-depth training, I now have the knowledge to deal with human rights violations more professionally, and it gives me the chance to investigate and report according to globally accepted standards," he said with a smile.

As South Sudan gears up to transition into a full-fledged democracy with its first-ever elections scheduled in 2024, human rights for all citizens are now more critical than ever. On this note, the Deputy Executive Director, Tambura County, addressed participants. "Both civil society organizations and the Government will play a large part in organizing free, fair, peaceful elections, and we cannot do this if our citizens' rights aren't respected. This training in upholding human rights for all is essential and timely," he stated. "Civil society representatives are always human rights defenders, and this training aims to strengthen their abilities at this critical time in South Sudan's history," concluded, a Human Rights Assistant from the UNMISS Field Office in the State.

The rule of law in Rumbek gets a boost through the monthly UNMISS forum on upholding human rights.

The monthly Human Rights and Rule of Law forum organized by UNMISS in Lakes State, South Sudan, deliberated on upholding the human rights of all citizens and enhancing the rule of law.

The forum was attended by representatives from the South Sudan People's Defense Forces, the South Sudan National Police Service, and delegates from customary, special, and high courts, women, and youth.

The interactive forum witnessed free and frank discussions on transitional justice as stipulated in the Revitalized Peace Agreement, including unlawful detentions of civilians in military facilities, which undermines the rights of individuals to a fair trial. This is a serious human rights violation for the state Coordinator of Community Empowerment for Progress Organization (CEPO).

"Civilians who have been accused of crimes must be detained by the appropriate authorities, in this case, the police, so that they can be tried according to the laws of the land. Military personnel have no right to detain or question civilian suspects," as stated by a member of CSO.



22 February 2022 Participants during the Monthly Rule of Law Forum in Rumbek. Photo by James Mawien Manyuol/UNMISS



Overview Of Quick Impact Projects (QIPS) Implemented By UNMISS HRD



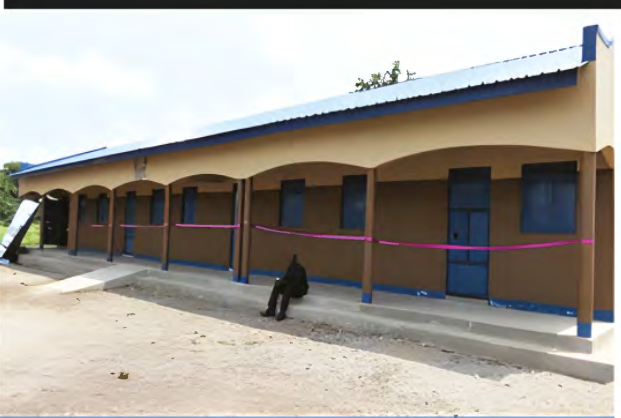
John Oziegbe, Human Rights Team Leader in Rumbek, during the handover ceremony of a fully renovated and furnished Public Prosecutor's Office in Lakes State. Photo by Nina Zubovic Vignjevic/UNMISS



ON 18 OCTOBER 2022, UNMISS HANDED OVER A SCHOOL TO THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION, IN EASTERN EQUATORIA.



A litigants shelter at the Rumbek High Court handed over alongside other structures by HRD UNMISS on 31 October 2022. [Photo: UNMISS]



DAA-DAKORO PRIMARY SCHOOL IN MVOLO/QIPS.



QIPS SAKURE POLICE STATION HANDED OVER ON 18 OCTOBER 2021 COMMUNITIES IN IN SAKURE CELEBRATING THE NEW POLICE POST





Voices From the Public and Mission Leadership

“In the last mandate cycle, UNMISS released seven public human rights reports, including the joint special reports with the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights, on Tambura and Southern Unity. These provide recommendations to the parties, authorities, and other stakeholders for improving the overall environment of justice, accountability, and reconciliation.”



Guang Cong, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General/Political, UNMISS (D/SRSG Political)

The UNMISS Human Rights Division (HRD) is visible not only through its monitoring and public reporting of human rights violations and abuses but also through its programmatic work and sustained engagements with various national and state-level stakeholders. The support provided to the Government and other stakeholders through our technical, capacity-building, and logistic support and good offices helps mainstream human rights into peace and political processes, enable

Excerpts from a Statement by Nicholas Haysom, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for South Sudan, and Head of UNMISS, to the United Nations Security Council



Nicholas Haysom, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for South Sudan (SRSG) and Head of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan.

and empower national institutions and actors to enhance greater protection of civilians, accountability, and enhance civic space, including freedom of expression. At the recent UNMISS convened Political Parties Forum in Juba on 18 May, I also emphasized the important role that political parties must play in the finalization of legislation related to truth and reconciliation and in creating the enabling environment for elections to strengthen the peace process.

The overall objective of the UNMISS HRD technical assistance and capacity-building activities is to work with other UNMISS components, UN agencies, funds and programmes, and other partners to contribute to enhancing the capacity of national stakeholders, enabling them to create a conducive environment for transparent, inclusive, and genuine consultation in relation to transitional justice, constitutional-making, and electoral processes. UNMISS HRD technical assistance and capacity-building activities promote a human rights-based approach to national reconciliation, development, and humanitarian assistance and have so far targeted four categories of stakeholders: the South Sudan People's Defense Forces, South Sudan National Police



Services, National Prison Services of South Sudan, and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) along with line ministries. In 2022, the UNMISS/HRD carried out 312 capacity building and sensitization programs for 11,055 individuals (7,105 men and 3,950 women). 44 per cent of those who participated and benefitted were from security agencies, while 26 per cent of participants were from civilian government offices and partners and 30% were from CSOs.

Despite various violations documented in the country, we acknowledge the positive steps taken by the Government to foster an inclusive and secure environment for the exercise of the right to freedom of expression and the promotion of democratic dialogue. For instance, in 2022, the Government amended the National Security Service Act of 2014 by limiting the powers of arrest of the National Security Service. The amendments will significantly contribute to the enhancement of the civic and political space in the context of the forthcoming constitutional making, transitional justice, and election processes. I also commend the government for convening the first-ever conference on transitional justice in South Sudan from 15 to 17 May aimed at paving the way towards the establishment of transitional justice mechanisms envisaged in Chapter V of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan (RARCSS) and helping build a culture of dialogue.

UN Security Council Resolution 2677 (2023) by which the UN Security Council extended the UNMISS mandate until 15 March 2024 underlines the importance of creating conditions conducive to civic and political space as a prerequisite for credible elections in 2024. To this end, the Security Council requested UNMISS to assist all parties to promote an open, free, inclusive, and safe civic space; to use good offices to assist the Government of South Sudan in taking a phased approach to elections, for which such a space is required; and to provide technical assistance, including capacity building and logistical support, focused on creating conditions for it, in coordination with the UNCT. In this regard, I would like to reaffirm the commitment of UNMISS to continue assisting the Government in its efforts to implement the Revitalized Peace Agreement, including establishing and operationalizing the transitional justice institutions provided for in the Agreement.



Projections: 2023

There is a need for continued support to the Government of South Sudan through technical assistance and capacity-building and strengthened financial support to increase the beneficiaries of these programmes. UN HRC resolution on technical assistance and capacity-building for South Sudan, adopted on 28 March 2023, calls, among other things, calls upon the international community to step up technical and financial assistance to South Sudan to improve the situation of human rights further, to enhance the functioning of the legal system, and support the Government of South Sudan to effectively deliver

necessary services, including criminal investigations and prosecution, education and health-care services, food and clean drinking water and infrastructure. U.N. Security Council Resolution 2625 (2023) requests UNMISS HRD to provide technical support, including capacity building, to international, regional, and national mechanisms and relevant local stakeholders engaged in monitoring, investigating, and reporting on violations of international humanitarian law and human rights violations and abuses, including those that may amount to war crimes or crimes against humanity, as appropriate.

Infographics on capacity building and technical assistance 2022

During the reporting period, 22.7 per cent of the capacity-building activities were dedicated to CSOs, while 23.9 per cent and 38.9 per cent targeted government officials and organized forces, respectively. 14.5 per cent targeted the general public engaged in human rights sensitization.

The number of stakeholders trained by HRD per category.



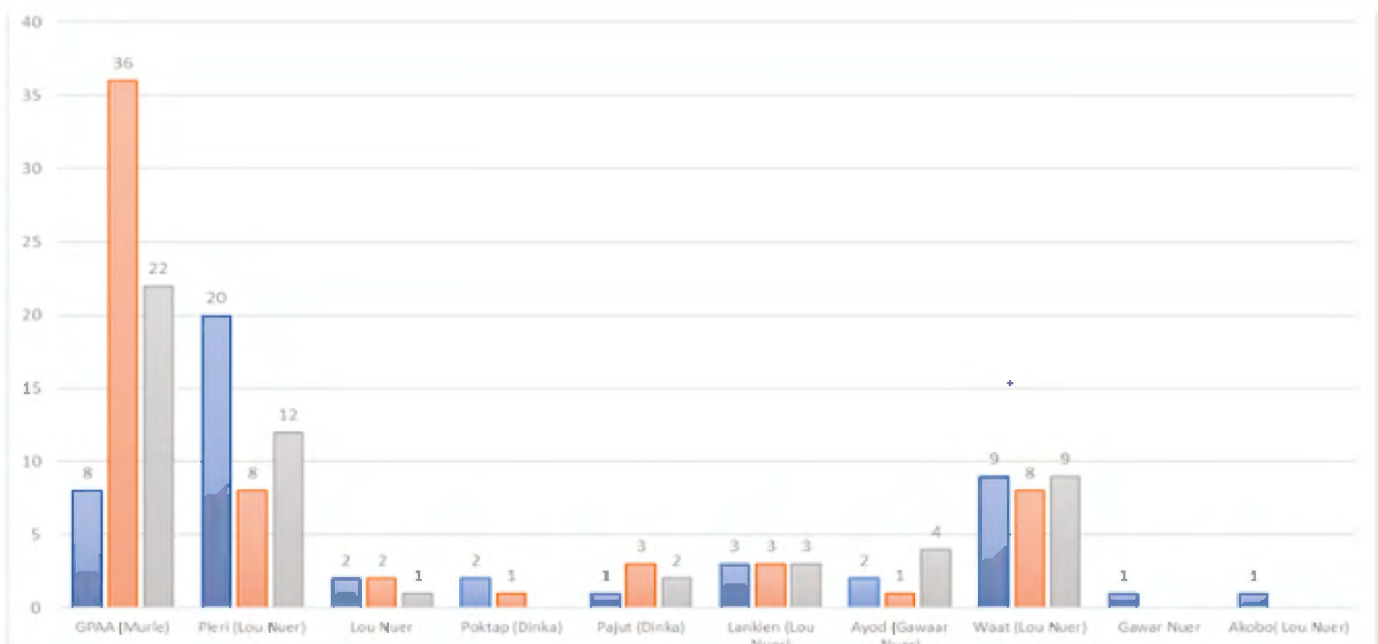


Percentage of activities conducted per stakeholder category



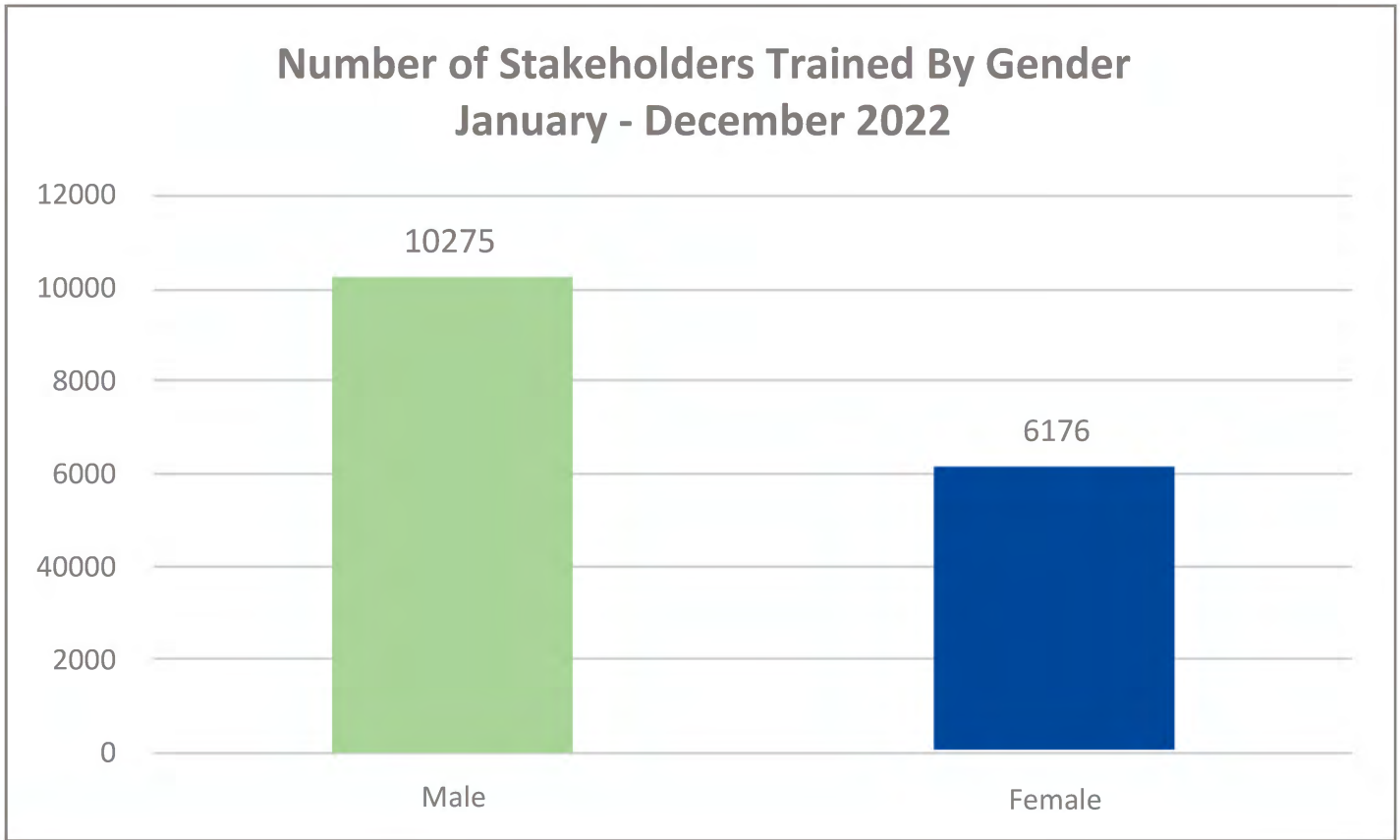
South Sudan Reconciliation, Stabilization, and Resilience multi-partner Trust Fund (RSRTF) Programming

UNMISS components and U.N. partners continued to advance the South Sudan Reconciliation, Stabilization, and Resilience multi-partner trust Fund (RSRTF) programming, respectively, in Jonglei and GPAA and in the border areas of Western Bahr El-Ghazal and Warrap States to mitigate conflicts, enhance social cohesion as well as provide technical assistance and capacity-building to the rule of law and justice actors at the national and sub-national levels. This is to facilitate the creation of a protective environment for civilians. Under the social cohesion pillar of the RSRTF program in Jonglei and GPAA, UNMISS HRD worked with U.N. partners to release 164 abductees, of whom 151 were reunited with their families. Abduction of women and children is being treated as a serious human rights violation, including in advocacy with authorities who are asked to act and prevent the violation from occurring.





The number of stakeholders trained by HRD per gender.



Of the 16,451 participants, 6,176 were women, while 10,275 were men.