

“A PERFECT STORM IS GATHERING”

Risk of Mass Atrocities in South Sudan

POLICY BRIEF NOVEMBER 2024



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teaches that the Holocaust was preventable and that by heeding warning signs and taking early action, individuals and governments can save lives. With this knowledge, the **Simon-Skjodt Center for the Prevention of Genocide** works to fulfill Elie Wiesel's challenge to do for the victims of genocide today what the world failed to do for the Jews of Europe in the 1930s and 1940s. The mandate of the Simon-Skjodt Center is to alert the national conscience, influence policy makers, and stimulate worldwide action to prevent and work to halt acts of genocide or related crimes against humanity, and advance justice and accountability. Learn more at ushmm.org/genocide-prevention.

The Simon-Skjodt Center for the Prevention of Genocide focuses on threats of large-scale, group-targeted, identity-based persecution potentially rising to the level of genocide and/or related crimes against humanity. We work on select countries where these crimes are ongoing or at serious risk, prioritizing cases that are receiving insufficient policy attention.

COVER: Much of South Sudan's population depend heavily on cattle, but competition over resources can lead to conflict and climate change has put grazing land at risk. Around 1,000 South Sudanese returnees and Sudanese refugees are crossing the border from Sudan to South Sudan every day. Sudan's war, which began in April 2023, has resulted in the world's largest displacement crisis. March 19, 2024. *Sally Hayden/SOPA Images via ZUMA Press Wire*

Quote attributable to Nicholas Haysom, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), speaking at the United Nations Security Council (SC/157910) on August 14, 2024.

List of Acronyms

AU	African Union
CHRSS	Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
NSS	National Security Service
R-ARCSS	Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan
RJMEC	Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission
SPLM	Sudan People's Liberation Movement
SPLM-IO	Sudan People's Liberation Movement in Opposition
UN	United Nations
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in South Sudan
UNSC	United Nations Security Council



Key Points

- South Sudan is at risk for new mass atrocities due to ongoing armed conflict with identity-based targeting, a history of mass atrocities, and impunity for those crimes.
- South Sudan also faces pressure from severe weather events and spillover from the war in Sudan.
- With its transition period extended for two years, the government will require support and scrutiny to implement its commitments on transitional justice, inclusive elections, and security sector reform.

INTRODUCTION

The Simon-Skjoldt Center for the Prevention of Genocide has published two reports detailing the risk of mass atrocities in South Sudan, first in February 2022 and then in January 2023.¹ In these reports, we identified a number of factors contributing to the risk of mass atrocities in South Sudan, including armed conflict in which civilians are targeted for brutal attacks, shrinking civic space, and the failure to fully and credibly implement measures of the peace agreement that ended South Sudan’s civil war in 2018. These challenges persist, exacerbated by the onset of war in neighboring Sudan and the impacts of severe flooding and drought. In September 2024, the government of South Sudan announced a two-year extension of the transitional period and postponed the holding of national elections. This extension is an opportunity for the government to make progress on key commitments to peace and justice. However, this delay is not itself a panacea for the mass atrocity risks that persist in South Sudan, which could see a return to violence if the transition falters or fails. This brief will examine ongoing and compounding risk factors for mass atrocities and offer recommendations for addressing these risks during the next two years.

BACKGROUND

South Sudan became independent from Sudan in 2011, following a brutal civil war in which nearly two million people were killed.² Within two years, a political crisis erupted into a civil war in which warring parties mobilized combatants and targeted civilians along ethnic lines. In August 2015, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) brokered a power-sharing agreement between the Sudan People’s

Liberation Movement (SPLM) and other parties to the conflict, including the country's largest opposition group—the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-In Opposition (SPLM-IO).³ The agreement collapsed in 2016, and parties to the conflict returned to targeting civilians based on their ethnicity or perceived political affiliation. In 2018, the parties signed a Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS). In May 2024, negotiations were held in Kenya to reach “holdout” groups who had not signed the R-ARCSS.⁴ Parties to these talks, called the Tumaini initiative, are anticipated to sign an agreement in Nairobi in November 2024.⁵

The R-ARCSS is still seen as a viable roadmap for South Sudan's transition.⁶ It includes provisions for transitional justice, a new constitution, security sector reform, and national elections.⁷ However, limited progress has been made. South Sudan's Parliament has passed bills for the creation of a Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing, and for the Compensation and Reparation Authority,⁸ but these bodies have not yet been operationalized, and progress on creating the Hybrid Court for South Sudan has stalled.⁹ The R-ARCSS envisions the adoption of a permanent constitution as a pre-condition for elections, but no constitution has yet been drafted.¹⁰ South Sudan also lags on several R-ARCSS provisions for security sector reform. Armed groups have not been fully integrated into a unified force.¹¹ The forces that have been integrated and deployed have been documented as harassing civilians, and this behavior, in addition to inadequate resourcing and rampant defections, only serves to undermine trust.¹²

South Sudan's transitional period was set to end in February 2025, following the first national elections in the country's history, slated for December 2024. In September, mere months before scheduled elections, the government announced an extension of the transitional period and delayed the elections. This is the second time this government has extended the political transition.¹³ While other actors have expressed support for the decision, there has also been a widespread expression of disappointment, frustration, and mistrust.¹⁴ The extension offers the government the opportunity to implement key commitments in the justice sector, security sector, constitution-making, and transitional justice, as well as make to preparations for free and fair elections. But this implementation will be taking place in a context of interlocking crises. The United Nations Commission of Human Rights in South Sudan (CHRSS) found that nearly all 14 of the United Nations' risk factors for atrocity crimes were present in South Sudan.¹⁵ South Sudanese leaders and stakeholders should use their time wisely so that ample progress can be made in such a precarious environment.

RISK OF MASS ATROCITIES

South Sudan has a history of impunity for mass atrocities and is experiencing armed conflict and instability in which civilians are frequently targeted along ethnic lines.¹⁶ Political actors continue to manipulate ethnic identity, stoking violence along these lines, to secure their own political and economic interests. These factors indicate that South Sudan is more likely to experience a new onset of mass atrocities that include the identity-based targeting of civilians.

History of mass atrocities and persistent impunity

South Sudan has a history of mass atrocities marked by the targeting of civilians on the basis of identity. Its five-year civil war left 400,000 people dead and millions displaced.¹⁷ The Chair of the CHRSS reported a “pattern of ethnic cleansing and population engineering.”¹⁸ These patterns, absent genuine transitional justice and institutional reform processes, increase the risk of new mass atrocities. Grievances remain unresolved and subject to exploitation, fueling conflict and divisions. Impunity for severe violations of human rights,

including by state officials, persists.¹⁹ Impunity can undermine trust in the state and can contribute to armed groups engaging in retaliatory violence or revenge killings.²⁰

Conflict and instability

South Sudan continues to experience armed conflict at the state and local levels. Most of this violence is the result of clashes between community militias and defense groups,²¹ though these groups have been documented as receiving support from political elites and even the military, and much of this violence continues to occur along the lines of ethnic or tribal identity.²²

Violence in South Sudan remains serious and includes killings, assaults, abductions, and conflict-related sexual violence. The UN Mission for South Sudan (UNMISS) has observed that violent incidents appear to be increasing in frequency.²³ UNMISS did find reduced levels of violence between government security forces and other armed groups.²⁴ States in South Sudan that have been particularly affected by intercommunal violence include Warrap, Jonglei, and the Greater Equatoria region.²⁵ Competition over scarce resources has prompted clashes between communities, leading to militarized campaigns of cattle raiding, kidnappings, and looting, and cycles of retaliatory violence and revenge killings, typically along ethnic lines.²⁶ Civilians also continue to be at risk for grave acts of sexual and gender-based violence. Widespread sexual violence destabilizes communities,²⁷ and in South Sudan, according to CHRSS: “Persistent sexual violence has shattered any belief in the capacity of society to protect women.”²⁸

UNMISS has noted that inter-communal violence, including over resources, is not new to South Sudan, but the inter-communal violence they have documented is linked to local and national political dynamics, with entrenched divisions on the basis of identity.²⁹ The CHRSS concluded that political elites fight their battles through proxies at the community level, “exacerbating the country’s ethnic cleavages, undermining societal cohesion, and sowing the seeds of future violence by generating new grievances that remain unaddressed.”³⁰

COMPOUNDING FACTORS

If South Sudan is unable to mitigate pressure from compounding factors, such as the war in neighboring Sudan and severe weather events, the human impact of these factors could exacerbate existing atrocity risks. As genocide expert Scott Strauss indicated, “mass atrocities take place in the context of a dynamic environment, in which escalating violence can be difficult to anticipate.”³¹ The factors below deserve focused attention.

War in Sudan

Since Sudan plunged into conflict in April 2023, over half a million refugees³² have fled to South Sudan, putting a strain on communities already facing dire humanitarian needs,³³ and exacerbating local tensions.³⁴ The conflict has also cut off two-thirds of South Sudan's oil revenue,³⁵ the largest source of funds for the government, which has used these funds as a tool for managing political elites.³⁶ The disruption in oil revenue has led the government to freeze salaries, even among security services.³⁷ The head of UNMISS, Nicholas Haysom, has expressed concern about the conflict in Sudan spilling into South Sudan, including a proliferation of firearms across the border.³⁸ Both warring parties in Sudan reportedly have crossed the border into South Sudan, generating fear among civilians in those areas.³⁹

The security situation in Abyei, an area disputed between South Sudan and Sudan, has remained tense. While fighting between the Misseriya and the Ngok Dinka communities has declined, inter-communal conflict, including over land⁴⁰, between the Ngok Dinka and the Twic Dinka communities has increased, with attacks and reprisals also recorded between the Ngok Dinka and Nuer communities.⁴¹ The flow of displaced persons from Sudan into the Abyei region has increased, which has exacerbated competition for limited resources.⁴²

Severe weather impacts

In South Sudan, severe weather events have been linked to an increase in intercommunal tension and clashes. According to the UN Environmental Programme, South Sudan is among the five countries in the world most vulnerable to the effects of climate change.⁴³ Approximately 95% of South Sudan's population depends on climate-sensitive livelihoods, such as agriculture and farming.⁴⁴ Disruption of these activities by serious weather events, such as flooding and droughts, has led to displacement, conflict over resources, and an increased vulnerability of men and boys to recruitment into armed groups.⁴⁵ Media and UN reports have linked incidents of intercommunal violence in Jonglei, Warrap, and Equatorial states to extreme weather events and battles over resources.⁴⁶ In the Equatoria region, for example, displaced armed Dinka herders have clashed with long-time residents over access to land.⁴⁷

SPOTLIGHT ON THE EXTENSION OF THE POLITICAL TRANSITION

In September 2024, South Sudan announced another two-year extension to implement key provisions in the 2018 R-ARCSS. The government justified the postponement by citing logistical and security issues and has committed to developing a timetable and budget for elections.⁴⁸ The news of the extension was criticized by several South Sudanese civil society organizations as well as the UN and international guarantors of South Sudan's peace process, including the United States.⁴⁹ CHRSS Commissioner Yasmin Sooka stated: "In the six years since the Revitalized Agreement was adopted, the main political parties have had sufficient time to implement its key provisions. But they have squandered the goodwill and practical advice of the African Union, IGAD, and the international community, as well as the desperate hopes of citizens."⁵⁰

The next two years are an opportunity to implement measures that could address impunity, mitigate atrocity risk, enable democratic participation, and improve the lives of the South Sudanese people. The government can capitalize on limited progress, like recent laws passed to set up election bodies⁵¹ and to operationalize transitional justice mechanisms.⁵² The Tumaini initiative offers a platform for addressing concerns and identifying pathways to implement R-ARCSS provisions.

Unfortunately, it is unclear whether the South Sudanese government is genuinely interested in transitioning to democratic governance and mitigating the risk of mass atrocities and return to civil war. In the past year, there have been worrying signs that the government was using the leadup to elections to preserve the status quo for elites as opposed to responding to the priorities of the people.⁵³ The government recently amended a law allowing the National Security Services (NSS), which Human Rights Watch has called the government's "preferred tool of repression," to arrest or detain people without a warrant.⁵⁴ Political elites have sought to exacerbate rather than resolve identity-based conflict at the subnational and community level.⁵⁵ The UN Security Council Panel of Experts for the South Sudan Sanctions Committee has indicated that many political actors "retain both the means and the will to resort to violence if they are dissatisfied with the outcome of a political process, particularly at the subnational level."⁵⁶

Significant pressure must be put on the government to repeal the new NSS Act and free civil society organizations and the media from a chokehold of intimidation and harassment.⁵⁷ Given South Sudan's history, ensuring regional and ethnic inclusivity, as well as the participation of traditionally marginalized groups such as displaced persons, survivors, women, and young people, will be essential for a credible process.⁵⁸ Civil society has been the driving force for political progress. Monitors should track where the government has been willing to consult with civil society actors on laws and whether resulting legislation reflects that engagement.

From an atrocity risk perspective, there is no time to waste. The situation in South Sudan is untenable. Atrocities are ongoing at the sub-national level, not to mention the slow violence of food insecurity, unmitigated climate disasters, and impunity. A fragile peace held together by aid, unpredictable oil revenue, and guns could crack under pressure. Given the history and continued practice of identity-based targeting and mobilization, this situation could devolve into more extensive mass atrocities or a return to civil war.

The transitional government of South Sudan has made many promises to its citizens, including to build inclusive political institutions, address past atrocities, and hold elections. Making genuine progress on election preparation and R-ARCSS obligations will not just signal the government's commitment to external backers, but to the South Sudanese people. Failing to make progress during this transition will only compound economic and humanitarian crises, and may serve to harden frustrations around political exclusion. These grievances could prompt political parties and communities to return to the use of violence to secure or retain political power.

THE WAY FORWARD

Other governments and institutions can support the people of South Sudan through this precarious period. The UNSC has extended the mandate of UNMISS until April 30, 2025, maintaining its force levels.⁵⁹ The UNSC has also renewed the South Sudan arms embargo, travel ban, and asset freeze measures into 2025.⁶⁰ The African Union (AU) and IGAD, as the brokers of the R-ARCSS, have a role in monitoring its implementation and stability.⁶¹ Unfortunately, the East African Community, a regional intergovernmental organization, may not be a neutral power broker should problems arise, as President Kiir is presently its chair.⁶²

Recommendations

Developing strategies for atrocity prevention can help ensure that responses are effective and reinforcing. The recommendations in this report support strategies for protecting vulnerable civilian populations and dissuading potential perpetrators from committing atrocities. The recommendations also reflect existing tools that can be utilized to support these strategies. Each risk and compounding factor in South Sudan can be addressed and mitigated without the need to "reinvent the wheel." What is most needed is a genuine commitment to and investment in prevention from South Sudan's government and its regional and international partners. Many civil society organizations in South Sudan continue to promote peace and stability under challenging circumstances and deserve support.

In March 2024, South Sudanese civil society organizations came together for a conference in Juba, signing a resolution on "The Way Forward for Transition for South Sudan."⁶³ The Juba resolution offers the following benchmarks for the conduct of free and fair elections:

- “The establishment of safety and security in areas affected by conflict;
- a decision on how constituencies will be determined;
- voter registration and robust civic education;
- modalities for involving IDPs and refugees, and
- expediting the registration of political parties.”⁶⁴

In addition, the resolution calls for political parties to establish ongoing dialogue on the full implementation of the R-ARCSS and stresses the importance and urgency of embarking on consultative transitional justice and constitution-making processes.

The Center also offers the following recommendations to encourage South Sudan to effectively use this postponement to advance priorities on security, accountability free and fair elections, constitution-making, and transitional justice and to provide support to vulnerable civilian populations facing humanitarian crises, severe weather impacts, and armed conflict. International partners and regional bodies can coordinate to provide aid and technical support. Those with leverage must also maintain a level of scrutiny on the government of South Sudan that encourages its leaders to meet their obligations in the time allotted.

The Government of South Sudan

- Provide timelines for national elections and the constitution-making process, along with budgets.
- Invest in outreach, including through social and public media, to provide regular updates across all states on progress during the political transition.
- Proceed with election preparations now, including census-taking, perception surveys, and voter eligibility and registration.
- Operationalize and fully resource all election-related, constitution-making, and transitional justice mechanisms.
- Adopt a clear timeframe with the AU for the establishment of the Hybrid Court for South Sudan, alongside support for domestic accountability measures.
- Fulfill RJMEC recommendations, including those on the security sector and judicial reform, the establishment of an independent and credible Constitutional Court, and the establishment of the Special Reconstruction Fund.
- Cease providing weapons and funding to localized militia. Opposition forces should likewise end this practice.
- Amend the NSS Act to remove broad powers of arrest and detention.
- Ensure any effort to unify government and opposition forces is properly planned and executed to prevent infighting. Provide unified forces with appropriate resources, with attention to equal participation across political affiliation, regional origin, and ethnicity, and with transparent measures in place to address misconduct.
- Ensure the inclusivity of political processes, such as election preparations, constitution-making process, and design of transitional justice mechanisms, by identifying ways to effectively engage women, youth, survivors, IDPs, and refugees.

Other Governments

- The US should appoint and fully resource a special presidential envoy for Sudan.
- The Troika on Sudan and South Sudan (the United States, the United Kingdom, and Norway) can coordinate its efforts to press the government of South Sudan to uphold its obligations under the R-ARCSS and hold free and fair elections.
- Support election-related, constitution-making, and transitional justice mechanisms, following benchmarks for transparency and accountability.
- With multilateral institutions, coordinate a unified funding approach for the next two years that supports humanitarian aid, election preparation, constitution-making, and transitional justice processes, including provisions for monitoring and indicators for transparency and progress.
- Press the South Sudanese government to increase civic space and stop targeting government critics.
- Support civil society in addressing grievances underlying the ongoing conflict through programming on social cohesion, depolarization, local dialogue, and training for combatting hate speech and disinformation, particularly around elections.
- Provide adequate funding for displaced persons and refugees, including those fleeing from Sudan, as well as the host communities.
- Fund programming that mitigates climate impacts, provides for long-term development and is conflict-sensitive.
- Invest in documentation initiatives and perception surveys.
- Ensure that UNMISS and the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNIFSA) have the appropriate resources to protect civilians, establish early warning mechanisms, and support the rule of law.
- Consider additional targeted sanctions on South Sudanese officials, specifically sanctions that explicitly respond to severe violations of human rights, sexual violence, and undermining democratic processes.

The AU and IGAD

- Actively monitor the election and mass atrocity risks and press the government to implement R-ARCSS provisions and RJMEC recommendations appropriately.

ENDNOTES

¹ United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, “Policy Brief: Worsening Risk of Mass Atrocities in South Sudan,” January 2023, https://www.ushmm.org/m/pdfs/South_Sudan_Policy_Brief_January_2023.pdf;

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, “Policy Brief: Immediate Risk of Mass Atrocities in South Sudan,” February 2022, https://www.ushmm.org/m/pdfs/South_Sudan_Policy_Brief_February_2022.pdf.

² United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, “1.9 Million Dead from Sudan’s Civil War; More Than 70,000 Deaths in 1998, Report Estimates,” Relief Web, December 10, 1998, <https://reliefweb.int/report/sudan/19-million-dead-sudancivil-war-more-70000-deaths-1998-report-estimates>.

³ “Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan,” The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), August 17, 2015, <https://peacemaker.un.org/node/2676>.

⁴ The United Nations (UN) Secretary-General Report from July 2024, referred to the Tumaini initiative as “a foundation for the inclusion of the non-signatory groups with a view to sustaining peace and should complement the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement.” See: United Nations Security Council: Report of the UN Secretary-General, “The Situation in South Sudan,” S/2024/572, July 29, 2024,

<https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=S/2024/572&Language=E&DeviceType=Desktop&LangRequested=False>.

⁵ On July 15, the participants reached agreement on eight protocols, including on issues related to humanitarian access, a permanent ceasefire, and security arrangements. However, the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-In Opposition (SPLM-IO) withdrew from the talks shortly after, arguing that the Tumaini initiative should not be a stand-alone agreement, but rather an annex to the R-ARCSS. However in September, mediators in Nairobi announced a timetable, with parties expected to sign the Consensus before the end of the month. See also: “South Sudan, holdout groups agree on eight protocols,” Sudan Tribune, July 15, 2024,

<https://sudantribune.com/article288304/>;

“SPLM-IO Pulls Out of Kenya-mediated Peace Initiative,” Sudan Tribune, July 17, 2024, <https://sudantribune.com/article288350/>;

“South Sudan holdout groups to sign peace deal next month,” The East African, October 10, 2024,

<https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/news/east-africa/south-sudan-holdout-groups-to-sign-peace-deal-next-month-4790308>.

⁶ United Nations officials have described the peace agreement as a continuing to be a relevant, viable roadmap. Charles Tai Gituai, Interim Chairperson of the Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (RJMEC), the Commission responsible for monitoring the implementation of the peace agreement, briefed the UN Security Council on August 14, 2024, and said that the agreement “‘remains the most valuable blueprint and transformative framework’ for peace and prosperity in South Sudan.” “Under Secretary-General for Peace Operations, Jean-Pierre Lacroix’s Briefing to the Security Council on South Sudan,” UN Peacekeeping, March 5, 2024, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/under-secretary-general-peace-operations-jean-pierre-lacroixs-briefing-to-security-council-south>;

“Creating Enabling Environment for Upcoming Elections in South Sudan Key to Advancing Peace Accord’s Implementation, Peacekeeping Mission Head Tells Security Council,” United Nations Meeting Coverage, August 14, 2024,

<https://press.un.org/en/2024/sc15791.doc.htm>.

⁷ “Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS),” The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), September 12, 2018, <https://docs.pca-cpa.org/2016/02/South-Sudan-Peace-Agreement-September-2018.pdf>.

⁸ These transitional justice bills will go to Parliamentary Committees and then to the President for his signature. See more here:

“Parliament passes Transitional Justice bills,” the Radio Community, September 3, 2024,

<https://theradiocommunity.org/parliament-passes-transitional-justice-bills-3049>;

“RJMEC urges TNLA to expeditiously work on pending bills,” Radio Tamazuj, April 23, 2024,

<https://www.radiotamazuj.org/en/news/article/rjmec-urges-tnla-to-expeditiously-work-on-pending-bills>.

⁹ “Human Rights Council Holds Dialogue on Technical Assistance and Capacity Building for South Sudan and Begins Dialogue on the Situation of Human Rights in Cambodia,” The United Nations Office in Geneva, October 9, 2023,

<https://www.ungeneva.org/en/news-media/meeting-summary/2023/10/le-conseil-se-penche-sur-lassistance-technique-et-le>.

¹⁰ In March 2024 the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM), South Sudan’s ruling party, released a statement saying that a number of elements of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS), including a permanent constitution, should not be seen as a prerequisite for holding elections in December. See:

“The SPLM Position Toward the National Elections as Provided by the Roadmap,” SPLM: Office of the Secretary General, March 20, 2024, <https://dr.211check.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/SPLM-Position-on-South-Sudan-December-2024-Elections-1.pdf>.

However, the Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (RJMEC) Interim Chairperson stated in December 2023;

“The delay in activating the National Constitutional Review Commission and the Preparatory Sub-Committee for the National Constitutional Conference is a cause for concern. These institutions play a crucial role in advancing the development of a permanent constitution, which will serve as the guiding framework for the upcoming elections at the conclusion of the Transitional Period.” See:

“Show commitment to elections, fund elections-related institutions and completion of unification of forces-RJMEC urged RTGoNU,” Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (RJMEC), December 7, 2023,

<https://www.jmeccsouthsudan.com/index.php/media-center/news/item/719-show-commitment-to-elections-fund-elections-related-institutions-and-completion-of-unification-of-forces-rtonu-urged>.

¹¹ Human Rights Council, *Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan*, A/HRC/55/26, March 13, 2024, <https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=A%2FHRC%2F55%2F26&Language=E&DeviceType=Desktop&LangRequested=False>.

South Sudan has made limited or no progress on disarmament and the stockpiling of arms and ammunition. See: UN Security Council Report of the Secretary-General, *Assessment of progress achieved on the key benchmarks established in paragraph 2 of resolution 2577 (2021)*, S/2024/309, 15 April 2024,

<https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=S%2F2024%2F309&Language=E&DeviceType=Desktop&LangRequested=False>;

See our earlier assessment here: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, "Policy Brief: Worsening Risk of Mass Atrocities in South Sudan," January 2023, https://www.ushmm.org/m/pdfs/South_Sudan_Policy_Brief_January_2023.pdf.

¹² United Nations Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General: Situation in South Sudan*, S/2024/188, February 26, 2024,

https://unmiss.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/report_of_the_secretary-general_on_the_situation_of_south_sudan_-_february_2024.pdf;

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<https://issafrica.org/pscreport/psc-insights/counting-down-to-south-sudans-elections>.

¹³ The signatories to the R-ARCSS signed a two-year extension in August 2022, citing the need to implement the agreement. "RJMEC endorses extension of South Sudan's transitional period," Sudan Tribune, September 18, 2024.

¹⁴ "Mixed reactions over South Sudan transitional period extension," Sudan Tribune, September 15, 2024,

<https://sudantribune.com/article290887/>;

"International peace guarantors criticise South Sudan election postponement," Reuters, September 19, 2024,

<https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/international-peace-guarantors-criticise-south-sudan-election-postponement-2024-09-19/>;

"Extraordinary RJMEC meeting endorses a further extension of South Sudan's transitional period," United Nations Mission in South Sudan, September 19, 2024,

<https://unmiss.unmissions.org/extraordinary-rjmecc-meeting-endorses-further-extension-south-sudan%E2%80%99s-transitional-period>;

"Joint Statement from Troika Capitals on South Sudan," US Department of State, September 21, 2024,

<https://www.state.gov/joint-statement-from-troika-capitals-on-south-sudan/>.

¹⁵ See paragraph 2, United Nations Human Rights Council Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, *State of Impunity: the persistence of violence and human rights violations in South Sudan*, A/HRC/52/CRP.3, April 3, 2023,

https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/sessions-regular/session52/A_HRC_52_CRP.3.pdf.

¹⁶ Genocide expert Scott Straus lists large-scale instability, armed conflict, and prior discrimination or violence against a particular group as warning signs of mass atrocities. He also cites impunity for past crimes as part of what can make past violence a risk factor for new violence. Scott Straus, *Fundamentals of Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention* (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum: 2016).

¹⁷ "South Sudan: Ethnic Conflict and Civil War," United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, October 2021,

<https://www.ushmm.org/genocide-prevention/countries/south-sudan/case-study>.

¹⁸ United Nations Human Rights Council, "Speech of the Chair of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan to the Human Rights Council," March 14, 2017, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2017/03/speech-chair-commission-human-rights-south-sudan-human-rights-council>.

¹⁹ "South Sudan Country Report on Human Rights Practices, 2023," United States Department of State, 2024,

<https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/south-sudan/>.

²⁰ United Nations Human Rights Council, *Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan*, A/HRC/55/26, March 13, 2024,

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²¹ The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) documented over 885 violent incidents in 2023, with most of the armed violence involving community militias or civil defense groups. See: "Annual Brief on Violence Affecting Civilians," Human Rights Division, United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), January-December 2023,

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Between January and March 2024, UNMISS documented 240 incidents of violence, with most of the violence attributed to community-based militias or civil defense groups. See: "Brief on Violence Affecting Civilians," Human Rights Division, United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), January-March 2024,

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https://unmiss.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/q1_2024_brief_violence_affecting_civilians_0.pdf.

²² "Annual Brief on Violence Affecting Civilians," Human Rights Division, United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), January-December 2023,

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