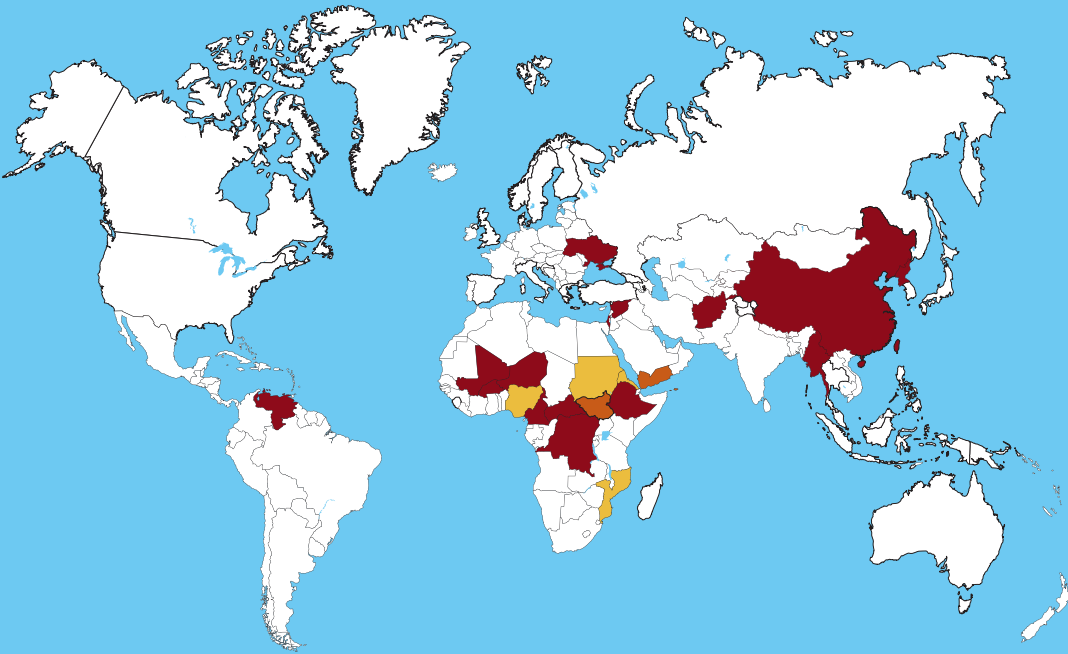


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The **Responsibility to Protect (R2P)** is a global norm, unanimously adopted by heads of state and government at the 2005 UN World Summit, aimed at preventing and halting Genocide, War Crimes, Ethnic Cleansing and Crimes Against Humanity. R2P stipulates that:

- » Every State has the Responsibility to Protect its populations from the four mass atrocity crimes (Pillar I).
- » The wider international community has the responsibility to encourage and assist individual States in meeting that responsibility (Pillar II).
- » If a State is manifestly failing to protect its populations, the international community must be prepared to take appropriate collective action, in a timely and decisive manner and in accordance with the UN Charter (Pillar III).

R2P Monitor applies an atrocity prevention lens to the following situations of concern:

CURRENT CRISIS

Mass atrocity crimes are occurring and urgent action is needed.

IMMINENT RISK

The situation is reaching a critical threshold and the risk of mass atrocity crimes occurring in the immediate future is very high if effective preventive action is not taken.

SERIOUS CONCERN

There is a significant risk of occurrence, or recurrence, of mass atrocity crimes within the foreseeable future if effective action is not taken.

R2P Monitor:

- » Provides *background* on populations at risk of mass atrocity crimes, with particular emphasis on key events and actors and their connection to the threat, or commission, of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.
- » Offers *analysis* of the country's past history in relation to mass atrocity crimes; the factors that have enabled their possible commission, or that prevent their resolution; and the receptivity of the situation to positive influences that would assist in preventing further crimes.
- » Tracks the *international response* to the situation with a particular emphasis upon the actions of the United Nations, key regional actors and the International Criminal Court.
- » Suggests *necessary action* to prevent or halt the commission of mass atrocity crimes.

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globalr2p.org

CURRENT CRISIS

Mass atrocity crimes are occurring and urgent action is needed.



More than 2,350 civilian casualties since 15 August 2021

AFGHANISTAN

Populations in Afghanistan are facing systematic and targeted human rights violations perpetrated by the Taliban de facto authorities. Other armed extremist groups also continue to pose a threat to civilians.

BACKGROUND

On 15 August 2021 Taliban forces entered Kabul, Afghanistan, effectively overthrowing the Afghan government. Since then, the Taliban and various armed groups have committed widespread human rights violations targeting populations throughout the country.

The Human Rights Service of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) has documented evidence of the Taliban perpetrating violations against former government officials and armed forces despite promises of an amnesty, including 160 extrajudicial killings, 178 arbitrary arrests and detentions, 23 instances of incommunicado detention and 56 incidents of torture and ill-treatment. Dozens of media workers and human rights defenders have been targeted with similar violations. UNAMA has also documented 217 instances of cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment of individuals accused of “moral” crimes, as well as 118 instances of excessive use of force by the Taliban.

The Taliban de facto authorities have also extrajudicially killed, arbitrarily arrested, detained, and tortured persons accused of affiliation with armed groups, such as the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan (ISIL-K) and the self-identified National Resistance Front (NRF). Civilians have faced violations and abuses in the country’s northern provinces, including Panjshir and Baghlan, as Taliban de facto security forces clash with fighters affiliated with the NRF. Localized clashes between de facto security forces and ISIL-K have also taken place in eastern Afghanistan.

The Taliban de facto authorities have severely restricted fundamental rights, including freedom of religion, as well as access to civic and public space. They have also imposed a sweeping series of decrees that severely restrict women’s rights to fully participate in public and daily life, including restrictions on freedom of movement and expression, employment opportunities and access to education and healthcare. According to Human Rights Watch, Taliban officials have also targeted minority populations, forcibly displacing residents, including Shia Hazara, in several provinces as a form of collective punishment.

Over 2,106 civilians were killed or wounded from 15 August 2021 to 15 June 2022. The casualties are primarily attributed to ISIL-K as a result of targeted attacks against ethnic and religious minority communities, particularly Shia Hazara and Shia and Sufi Muslims. ISIL-K perpetrated most of these attacks with improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in places of worship, education and other civilian areas. From April-May 2022 over 150 civilians were killed in a series of attacks targeting places of worship, schools and minorities, including the Shia Hazara. Throughout August 2022 over 250 people were killed and injured in a series of bombings, including those targeting Shia neighborhoods of Kabul ahead of the religious commemoration of Ashura. Many of these attacks were attributable to ISIL-K.

The people of Afghanistan are facing a growing humanitarian crisis, compounded by the impact of sanctions and the freezing of state assets. According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), more than half the population is currently in need of humanitarian aid, with 1 million Afghan children facing acute hunger. In 2021 around 700,000 Afghans were forced to flee their homes as a result of hostilities, adding to the 5 million who have been displaced since 2012.

ANALYSIS

Despite assurances from the Taliban, the risk of further war crimes and crimes against humanity, particularly for vulnerable populations, persists. The Taliban de facto authorities have frequently targeted women and girls, minorities, journalists, civil servants, human rights defenders and those affiliated with the former Afghan government with violations that appear to be perpetrated on a widespread and systematic basis.

Efforts by the Taliban to exclude women and girls from social, economic and political spheres have institutionalized large scale and systematic gender-based discrimination and violence against them. Continued restrictions on fundamental freedoms could lead to more severe violations of international law and possible atrocities. Impunity for these violations significantly increases the likelihood of escalation.

Meanwhile, religious minorities, particularly the Shia Hazara, continue to be targeted by ISIL-K. Recent attacks and the direct targeting of minorities indicate that the Taliban is likely

unable or unwilling to protect vulnerable populations. Localized clashes between the Taliban and ISIL-K, as well as between the Taliban and NSF, throughout the country also pose an imminent risk to civilians.

During two decades of war with the Afghan government, the Taliban perpetrated likely crimes against humanity and war crimes. Meanwhile, Afghan security forces, members of the United States (US) military and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) may have also committed war crimes, including the torture of detainees and summary executions.

The Taliban must honor their obligations under international law and uphold their responsibility to protect all populations across Afghanistan without distinction.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

Since 2011 the UN Security Council (UNSC) has imposed an arms embargo and sanctions on individuals or entities who support the Taliban and its affiliates. On 22 December 2021 the UNSC adopted Resolution 2615, allowing for the flow of humanitarian aid into Afghanistan without violation of UN sanctions against the Taliban. On 17 March 2022 the UNSC renewed the mandate of UNAMA, including its robust human rights monitoring mandate. In June the UNSC removed two Taliban officials, the Minister of Higher Education and the acting Deputy Education Minister, from the travel ban exemption list due to policies barring Afghan girls from attending secondary schools.

On 7 October 2021 the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) appointed a Special Rapporteur to monitor and report on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan. During its 50th session, the HRC held an urgent debate on the situation of women and girls in Afghanistan and passed a resolution calling for a similar debate at the upcoming 51st session.

On 5 March 2020 the Appeals Chamber of the International Criminal Court (ICC) authorized the Office of the Prosecutor to investigate alleged atrocity crimes perpetrated in Afghanistan since 1 July 2002. On 27 September 2021 Chief Prosecutor Karim Khan announced the decision to focus on crimes allegedly perpetrated by the Taliban and ISIL-K, and to de-prioritize other aspects of the investigation, including likely war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by Afghan national security forces, US forces and the CIA.

NECESSARY ACTION

As the de facto authorities, the Taliban are bound by all existing international human rights obligations codified in the treaties to which Afghanistan is a state party. They must uphold these obligations, including by guaranteeing the equal protection and promotion of human rights of all Afghans, regardless of gender, ethnic background, religious belief or political affiliation. The Taliban must investigate patterns of human rights violations documented by UNAMA and take immediate steps to prevent future violations, including by holding perpetrators accountable. The Taliban should also allow the international community to provide assistance in meeting these obligations. It is imperative

that the Taliban cooperate with and facilitate access for the UN Special Rapporteur, UNAMA – including its Human Rights Service – and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), as well as ensure the safety of all humanitarian workers and organizations.

The international community should continue to pursue international justice for war crimes committed in Afghanistan, regardless of the position, nationality or affiliation of the alleged perpetrator. The ICC Chief Prosecutor should reconsider the decision to exclude likely atrocity crimes perpetrated by Afghan national security forces, US forces and the CIA from investigations.



666,000+ people displaced by conflict in the north-west and south-west regions

CAMEROON

Civilians in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon continue to face atrocity crimes due to widespread violence between government forces and armed separatists.

BACKGROUND

In 2016 English-speaking lawyers, students and teachers in Cameroon began protesting their cultural marginalization by the Francophone-dominated government, leading to a violent crackdown by security forces. In October 2017 Anglophone separatists proclaimed independence and declared a new state of “Ambazonia” in the north-west and south-west regions of Cameroon. Since then, armed separatists and Cameroonian security forces have continued to clash, resulting in widespread abuses against the civilian population by both sides to the conflict. During the past year armed separatists have become increasingly violent, killing, kidnapping and terrorizing populations while steadily asserting control over large parts of the Anglophone regions. More than 6,000 people have been killed since 2016.

Security forces have perpetrated extrajudicial killings and widespread sexual and gender-based violence, burned Anglophone villages, and subjected individuals with suspected separatist ties to arbitrary detention, torture and ill-treatment. Armed

separatists have also perpetrated abuses, including kidnapping and killing civilians. Separatists have banned government education and frequently attack, threaten and abduct students and teachers, as well as burn, destroy and loot schools. Eighty percent of schools in the Anglophone regions are closed or destroyed, denying at least 700,000 children an education.

Targeted attacks on health facilities and humanitarian workers have restricted the delivery of vital aid. Approximately 30 percent of health facilities in the Anglophone region are unable to operate. During March 2022 Médecins Sans Frontières suspended its activities in south-west Cameroon due to the dangerous operating environment and increased risk of being arrested or persecuted for providing humanitarian assistance. On 8 June armed separatists destroyed and burned down the Mamfe district hospital in south-west Cameroon.

The Anglophone and Francophone areas of Cameroon have been unified since 1961, but there have been long-term disputes over the extent to which access to government resources is controlled by the French-speaking majority. Although the Anglophone minority constitutes 20 percent of the population of Cameroon, they are a majority in the north-west and south-west.

Inter-communal violence has also escalated elsewhere in the region. Between 25–27 June at least 30 people were killed in inter-communal clashes over disagreements regarding ownership and use of land between the Oliti and Messaga Ekoi communities in Akwaya, south-west Cameroon. Armed separatists have reportedly been hired by the Oliti community to carry out attacks.

OCHA estimates that at least 592,600 people have been internally displaced by violence in the north-west and south-west regions, while more than 74,000 have fled to Nigeria. According to OCHA, more than 2 million people are affected in the north-west and south-west regions, and in need of humanitarian assistance.

ANALYSIS

What began as a political dispute in the Anglophone regions is now a complex armed conflict and a major humanitarian crisis that disproportionately affects the civilian population. The targeting of individuals based upon their cultural identity poses a direct threat to Anglophone and Francophone civilians and may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The conflict dynamics in the north-west and south-west are changing as conflict becomes increasingly financially lucrative, with separatist groups having expanded their sources of revenue through kidnapping and extortion. Ethnic communities are often targeted for their alleged collaboration with government forces.

With more than 200 different ethnic communities living in Cameroon, there is also a history of inter-communal tensions in other parts of the country. Tensions are often rooted in the Anglophone conflict and have been exacerbated by the proliferation of arms.

The government continues to deny the severity of the crisis and has failed to address the root causes of the conflict or provide a political means for resolving it.

The government of Cameroon is failing to uphold its responsibility to protect and requires international assistance to mediate an end to the armed conflict.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

Despite the government's failure to protect populations from violations and abuses of human rights, or to hold security forces accountable for extrajudicial killings, during October 2021 Cameroon was re-elected to the HRC for the 2022–2024 term.

On 13 May 2019 the UNSC held an Arria-formula meeting on the crisis in Cameroon, its first and only meeting on the situation.

On 21 March 2022 the Council of the European Union (EU) approved conclusions on Cameroon, expressing serious concern about the ongoing crisis in the north-west and south-west regions and appealing for an immediate end to the violence as well as for respect of human rights and humanitarian principles.

On 29 April the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) expressed deep concern about widespread violent attacks and clashes between security forces and armed separatist groups in Cameroon. CERD urged the government to prioritize national reconciliation and transitional justice, as well as ensure accountability.

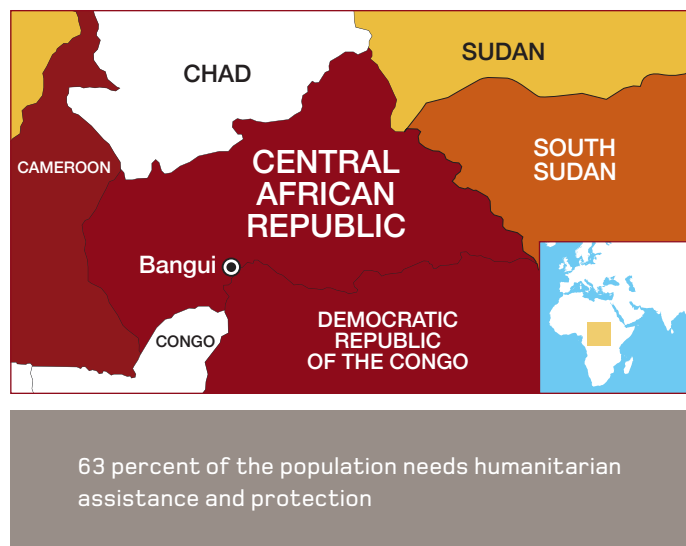
From 25–26 July French President Emmanuel Macron visited Cameroon and discussed food security, governance and insecurity.

NECESSARY ACTION

Security forces must end all extrajudicial killings of unarmed civilians and ensure that the human rights of all Cameroonians are equally protected, regardless of cultural identity. Security forces implicated in violations of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and International Human Rights Law (IHRL) should be investigated and held accountable. Armed separatist groups must also halt attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure.

The government should hold an inclusive dialogue with parties to the Anglophone crisis, mediated by a neutral player on neutral territory. The government must also invest in programs that meaningfully address the root causes of inter-communal violence.

Foreign governments and regional organizations should suspend all military assistance to Cameroon until its security forces have made demonstrable progress toward upholding the human rights of all Cameroonians. The African Union (AU) and Economic Community of Central African States should work with the government to prevent any further deterioration of the armed conflict. The UNSC should add Cameroon to its formal agenda.



CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Populations in the Central African Republic are facing possible atrocity crimes due to ongoing violence by armed groups and government and allied forces.

BACKGROUND

For nearly two years an alliance of predatory armed groups, known as the Coalition des patriotes pour le changement (CPC), have engaged in a violent offensive against the government of the Central African Republic (CAR). Since then, the CPC and affiliated armed groups have perpetrated widespread violations of IHL, including killing and abducting civilians, the forcible recruitment of child soldiers, and attacks on civilian infrastructure, humanitarian workers and the UN peacekeeping mission in CAR (MINUSCA). According to OHCHR, two CPC-affiliated armed groups, the Union pour la Paix en Centrafrique (UPC) and the Front Populaire pour la Renaissance de la Centrafrique, have also perpetrated systematic and widespread conflict-related sexual violence, including rape, gang rape and sexual slavery.

Since the CPC launched their offensive against the government in December 2020, the Central African Armed Forces (FACA) – working closely with Russian security partners, including mercenary fighters from a private security company, the Wagner Group – have responded with counter-offensives. Some armed groups have consequently dispersed to outlying villages and are carrying out exactions, threats and violent reprisals against local populations, particularly in Ouaka, Basse-Kotto and Haute-Kotto prefectures. During military operations, FACA troops and Russian mercenaries have perpetrated summary executions, arbitrary killings, torture, rape and forced disappearances, and have also occupied schools and looted humanitarian organizations and UN offices. The UN has alleged that mercenary fighters, alongside FACA troops, have continued to commit these abuses and are displacing thousands as they increase their control of gold-mining areas.

FACA troops and Russian mercenaries are also committing targeted attacks and ill-treatment against ethnic and religious minorities, particularly Fulanis and Muslims, as well as hostile incidents against MINUSCA. These forces have reportedly recruited, trained and armed former combatants from the predominantly Christian anti-balaka militias, as well as other young Christians, to use as proxies. In December 2021 one of these militias perpetrated an attack in Boyo, Ouaka prefecture, where they killed at least 20 civilians and held 700 hostage in the village mosque for three days, threatening to detonate grenades. According to OHCHR, the incident was conducted to target and punish the Muslim community and likely amounts war crimes and crimes against humanity. Former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, and the UNSC-mandated Panel of Experts have warned that the pattern of violations against minority communities risks triggering a new cycle of violence along communal, religious and ethnic lines.

Nearly 1.4 million people have been forced to flee successive crises in CAR since 2013. Approximately 3.1 million people need humanitarian assistance and protection.

ANALYSIS

Despite the government's declaration of a unilateral ceasefire on 15 October 2021, confrontations and attacks against civilians have persisted. Unless all parties to the conflict adhere to the ceasefire, threats to populations will continue. Ethnic and religious communities continue to be targeted on the suspicion of alleged collusion with armed groups, increasing tensions and risking further violence. The cross-border flow of foreign fighters, arms and natural resources is contributing to a thriving conflict-economy. Armed groups have increasingly used explosive ordnance, creating new conflict dynamics and hampering the delivery of humanitarian aid, trade and access to agricultural fields. Ongoing hostility and attacks on MINUSCA have impacted its ability to effectively implement its civilian protection mandate and conduct human rights investigations.

Russian mercenaries operating in CAR have a history of perpetrating atrocities, including in Libya, Mozambique and Syria. The EU has imposed sanctions on companies and individuals associated with the Wagner Group, alleging it has sent private military personnel to conflict zones around the world to “fuel violence, loot natural resources and intimidate civilians in violation of international law.”

The protracted crisis in CAR has its origins in the overthrow of then President François Bozizé in March 2013 by the mainly Muslim Séléka rebel alliance. Abuses by the Séléka led to the formation of anti-balaka militias and the collapse of state institutions. Anti-balaka and ex-Séléka forces may have committed war crimes and crimes against humanity between 2013-2015. A 2019 peace deal formally ended the armed conflict, but signatories continue to perpetrate widespread human rights abuses.

Despite the 2015 creation of the Special Criminal Court (SCC) in CAR and trials at the ICC, accountability for atrocities

perpetrated since 2013 remains limited. In April 2022 the SCC opened a trial concerning war crimes and crimes against humanity allegedly committed in May 2019 by three suspected members of the Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation armed group. In June the SCC indicted a UPC leader for crimes against humanity and war crimes allegedly committed in May 2018.

The government of CAR requires ongoing international assistance to stabilize the country and uphold its responsibility to protect.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

The UNSC has passed 14 resolutions since October 2013 that emphasize the government's responsibility to protect populations in CAR. A UNSC-mandated sanctions regime and arms embargo have been in place since 2013, imposing travel bans and asset freezes on 14 individuals and one entity.

During May 2014 the government referred the situation in CAR to the ICC. Two former anti-balaka leaders are already on trial at the ICC for crimes against humanity and war crimes while Chad surrendered an additional former anti-balaka leader to the Court in March 2022. The trial of Mahamat Said Abdel Kani, a Séléka leader, is scheduled to open in September. In July 2022 the ICC unsealed an arrest warrant for a former government minister for crimes against humanity and war crimes allegedly committed in 2013.

On 16 September 2021 the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) adopted a roadmap for peace, which called for all armed actors to commit to a ceasefire.

From 9-12 May 2022 the UN Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide visited CAR to advance the implementation of the national plan to combat hate speech.

NECESSARY ACTION

All armed actors must rigorously adhere to their obligations under IHL and IHRL. It is imperative that FACA and allied forces ensure the protection of all populations during military operations and allow MINUSCA to effectively carry out its mandate. FACA and allied forces must stop using militias to carry out attacks against civilian populations. The UNSC should call on all armed actors to abide by the ceasefire and implement the ICGLR roadmap.

The international community must continue supporting MINUSCA to ensure that the mission can strengthen its capacity to protect vulnerable populations by increasing its patrols and early warning mechanisms.

All perpetrators of atrocity crimes in CAR should be held legally accountable, regardless of their rank, affiliation or nationality. The government should prioritize accountability by continuing its cooperation with the ICC and respecting the independence of the SCC.



At least 2.4 million people internally displaced in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger

CENTRAL SAHEL

Populations in the Central Sahel – Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger – face atrocity crimes as a result of attacks by armed Islamist groups and security forces, as well as conflict between ethnic militias and community "self-defense groups."

BACKGROUND

For over a decade, attacks by armed Islamist groups – including groups affiliated with al-Qaeda and the so-called Islamic State Sahel Province – have spread and intensified throughout Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger. Since the start of 2022, populations in Burkina Faso and Mali have faced recurrent and escalating attacks by armed Islamist groups, as well as scaled up counterterrorism operations by defense and security forces. More civilian fatalities were reported in the Central Sahel in the first eight months of 2022 than in all of 2021, with at least 2,050 civilians killed.

The UN's Commission of Inquiry (CoI) on Mali reported that between 2012–2018 armed Islamist groups committed crimes against humanity and war crimes, including murder, torture, recruitment of children, maiming, rape and sexual violence. Across the region, armed Islamist groups have used sieges, threats, kidnapping, IEDs and landmines as deliberate tactics of war. Communities that resist their rule have faced blockades, leaving millions increasingly isolated and vulnerable. According to the UN, Malian authorities control only 15 percent of the country's territory while the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) reported that approximately 60 percent of Burkina Faso remains under state control.

These groups also strategically destroy and loot civilian objects, including places of worship, health centers, food reserves, crops, water services and bridges. Armed groups have targeted secular state education across the region, burning schools and threatening, abducting or killing teachers. The number of schools affected by violence has tripled in three years, with more than 5,000 schools currently closed or non-operational. Armed Islamist groups have also perpetrated attacks targeting

humanitarian workers and the UN peacekeeping operation in Mali (MINUSMA). Since July 2013 the UN has documented 163 MINUSMA peacekeepers killed in hostile acts.

The CoI and national human rights mechanisms have found that some counterterrorism operations by Sahelian security forces, the regional G5 Sahel Joint Force and international forces have led to grave human rights violations and abuses that may amount to war crimes. Since the beginning of 2022, hundreds of civilians have been killed in counterterrorism operations by the Malian Armed Forces and allied mercenaries from the Wagner Group. During August the Burkinabé army acknowledged it had killed civilians in airstrikes in Koupela province. State-sponsored militias, notably the Volunteers for the Defense of the Homeland, have also been implicated in grave crimes, including unlawful killings, torture and enforced disappearances of hundreds of civilians and suspected Islamist fighters in Burkina Faso.

Throughout the region violence is also taking place between rival ethnic militias and self-defense groups. In Mali, violence between Dozos – traditional hunters that are mainly from the Dogon ethnic community – and ethnic Bambara fighters against members of the predominantly Muslim Fulani community has killed thousands since 2016. The establishment of communal self-defense groups, such as the Koglweogo, has led to numerous abuses and fueled violence along ethnic lines in Burkina Faso. In Niger, self-defense militias established during 2021 among ethnic Arab, Djerma and Tuareg communities in Tillabéri and Tahoua have perpetrated numerous attacks.

The Central Sahel is one of the fastest growing displacement crises in the world, with at least 2.4 million people internally displaced, including more than 1.9 million in Burkina Faso alone. Nearly 15 million people need humanitarian assistance.

ANALYSIS

The crisis in the Central Sahel has its origins in Mali, where Tuareg separatists and armed Islamist groups seized territory in the north a decade ago following a military coup. Despite numerous security initiatives, the conflict shifted into inter-communal violence and attacks by armed Islamist groups. Porous borders and the absence of state authority have enabled the expansion of these groups. These conditions have been exploited by armed Islamist groups who have targeted young Fulani men for recruitment.

Populations continue to be targeted and persecuted on the basis of their ethnic and/or religious identity. The increased attacks against civilians are primarily in response to communities creating self-defense groups and/or resisting the punitive collection of “zakat” or alms. The surge in civilian deaths in Mali in 2022 coincides with the arrival of Russian mercenaries and the departure of French and other Western forces.

While Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger each face distinct challenges, these states also share a legacy of structural vulnerabilities, weak governance and limited state presence. Impunity for human rights violations and abuses undermines confidence in state

authority, heightens inter-communal tensions and fuels cycles of violence and recruitment into armed groups.

Historically, the Dogon, Bambara, Djerma and Fulani communities have clashed over land, water and grazing rights.

The governments of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger are struggling to uphold their responsibility to protect.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

In January 2013, following a referral by the government, the ICC launched an investigation into alleged crimes committed in Mali since January 2012. On 9 May 2022 the ICC opened the trial of Hassan Ag Abdoul Aziz Ag Mahmoud, an alleged member of an armed Islamist group charged with involvement in crimes, including rape, torture, persecution, enforced marriages and sexual slavery committed from April 2012 to January 2013.

The UNSC subjects eight individuals in Mali to targeted sanctions for obstructing the peace process and violating human rights, including recruiting child soldiers and attacking UN personnel. On 29 June 2022 the UNSC renewed MINUSMA's mandate for an additional year.

Fourteen European countries issued a joint statement on 23 December condemning the deployment of the Wagner Group to Mali, stressing that their presence will aggravate the human rights situation. In July 2022 the EU sanctioned three al-Qaeda affiliated commanders due to attacks against civilians, MINUSMA and defense and security forces in Burkina Faso.

Mali and Burkina Faso were suspended from the AU and ECOWAS following their May 2021 and January 2022 coups, respectively. On 3 July ECOWAS lifted sanctions placed on Mali.

NECESSARY ACTION

While countering violent extremism remains crucial in the Central Sahel, it is essential that all three governments and international forces establish civilian harm mitigation mechanisms and ensure that their efforts do not exacerbate inter-communal tensions and fuel distrust of state authority.

Additional measures must be implemented to end the proliferation of arms, militias and self-defense groups and improve land management and local governance. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration efforts, as well as support for local reconciliation initiatives, need to be focused on areas where atrocity risks are greatest.

The governments of the Central Sahel, with the support of MINUSMA, OHCHR and the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel, should investigate all violations and abuses of IHL and IHRL. Malian transitional authorities must cooperate with MINUSMA and ensure that the Mission can carry out its mandate, particularly its human rights investigations.



Over 1 million Uyghurs and people from other majority-Muslim ethnic groups have been detained in “re-education” or “de-extremification” facilities

CHINA

The systematic persecution of Uyghurs and other majority-Muslim ethnic groups in China may amount to crimes against humanity and genocide.

BACKGROUND

Under the guise of combatting religious extremism and terrorism, in recent years the Chinese government and authorities in the northwestern Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) have increased their persecution of members of the ethnic Uyghur community, as well as Kazakhs, Kyrgyz and other majority-Muslim ethnic groups.

Over 1 million people, mainly Uyghurs, have been arbitrarily detained in “re-education” or “de-extremification” facilities since around 2017. According to the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, more than 380 suspected detention facilities in XUAR have been built or expanded since 2017. There are reports of widespread rape, sexual abuse and torture of ethnic minorities in these facilities. In May 2022 various news outlets published investigations on the “Xinjiang Police Files,” providing thousands of photographs of detained people and details on a shoot-to-kill policy for those who try to escape. An estimated 880,000 children in XUAR – whose parents are allegedly detained or in exile – have been placed in state-run orphanages or boarding schools.

Approximately 100,000 Uyghurs are also working under conditions that strongly suggest forced labor, with many transferred from detention camps to factories. Reports have identified 135 detention facilities in XUAR that have on-site factories where detainees are reportedly forced to work. The factories are part of supply chains that allegedly provide goods for 82 global brands. An August 2022 report from the UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery determined that forced labor among Uyghur, Kazakh and other ethnic minorities has been occurring in sectors such as agriculture and manufacturing in XUAR, and in Tibet. The Helena Kennedy Centre for International Justice has reported that

over 100 international brands may be tied to Uyghur forced-labor-produced cotton. According to the Coalition to End Forced Labour in the Uyghur Region, 45 percent of the world’s polysilicon comes from XUAR, implicating nearly the entire global solar panel industry in Uyghur forced labor.

The Chinese government is also conducting a coercive campaign to reduce birth rates among Uyghurs and other majority-Muslim populations in XUAR. The campaign reportedly includes forced abortions and sterilizations. Chinese government statistics reveal that the 2020 birthrate in XUAR was only 8.14 per 1,000 people, nearly half the figure from 2017.

Uyghurs in XUAR and around the world also face surveillance by the Chinese government. In April 2022 the Woodrow Wilson Center reported that since 1997 the Chinese government has targeted over 5,500 Uyghurs outside China, including over 1,500 Uyghurs who have been detained and forcibly returned to China.

These measures have been imposed in conjunction with increased restrictions on religious practice. In March 2017 XUAR authorities passed the “Regulation on De-extremification,” which prohibits a range of “extreme” behaviors, such as “abnormal” beards. According to the Uyghur Human Rights Project, 1,046 imams and other religious figures from XUAR have been detained in camps or imprisoned since 2014. Chinese authorities have also engaged in the systematic destruction of Uyghur cultural heritage, demolishing or damaging thousands of shrines, cemeteries and pilgrimage sites.

According to the Helena Kennedy Centre, the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps, a state-run paramilitary group, is responsible for myriad abuses targeting Uyghurs in XUAR, including systematic forced migration, forced labor, mass internment, land expropriation, repressive policing and religious persecution.

ANALYSIS

China has perpetrated a repressive campaign against Uyghurs and other majority-Muslim ethnic groups in the region for several decades, but abuses have significantly escalated since 2017. Leaked government documents reveal that the crackdown was a result of pressure from senior officials, including President Xi Jinping. The former Communist Party Secretary of XUAR, Chen Quanguo, subsequently intensified Uyghur persecution and expanded the detention camps. The Xinjiang Police Files further implicates top officials and demonstrates how “so-called” counterterrorism is used to justify the arbitrary detention of Uyghurs.

Under customary international law and the Rome Statute of the ICC, the widespread and systematic persecution of Uyghurs and other majority-Muslim ethnic groups on religious, cultural, ethnic and gender grounds; enforced disappearances; forcible transfers; the large-scale detention program; torture of detainees; forced sterilization and sexual violence; and denial of information regarding the fate of persons in state custody could constitute crimes against humanity.

The Chinese government also appears to be intentionally perpetrating at least four acts prohibited under Article II of the Genocide Convention: “imposing measures intended to prevent births” within a targeted group; “causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;” “deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;” and “forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.”

The government of China is failing to uphold its responsibility to protect and is likely perpetrating atrocities against Uyghurs and other majority-Muslim ethnic groups.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

After requesting unfettered access to XUAR for over three years, then UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, traveled to China on a non-investigative visit in May 2022. On the last day of her term, High Commissioner Bachelet released her office's long-awaited report on human rights in XUAR.

In January 2021 the US formally accused China of committing genocide and crimes against humanity against the Uyghur population and members of other majority-Muslim ethnic groups. Since then, the parliaments of Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, the EU, France, Lithuania, Netherlands and United Kingdom (UK) have also recognized the situation in Xinjiang as constituting genocide and/or crimes against humanity.

In the absence of formal legal measures, the London-based Uyghur Tribunal, an independent people's tribunal, investigated allegations of mass atrocities in XUAR. In December 2021 the Tribunal concluded that the Chinese government is perpetrating genocide and crimes against humanity.

The governments of Canada, UK, US and the EU have sanctioned Chinese government officials and taken steps to ban goods tied to Uyghur forced labor. The US government's Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act took effect on 21 June 2022, preventing the import of goods made “in whole or in part” in XUAR from entering the country.

At the 50th session of the HRC the Netherlands delivered a statement on behalf of 47 countries expressing concern about human rights abuses in XUAR, urging China to allow independent observers access to the region. In a June 2022 statement, 42 UN experts expressed serious concern about China's human rights record, particularly in XUAR.

NECESSARY ACTION

The government of China should release all persons being arbitrarily detained in “re-education camps” and related facilities, stop the practice of forcibly preventing births and separating Uyghur children from their families, cease the deliberate destruction of Uyghur cultural heritage, and repeal the “Regulation on De-extremification.”

The HRC should mandate a Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in China or a fact-finding mission (FFM) to investigate systematic human rights violations in XUAR. UNESCO should investigate cultural destruction in XUAR.

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Muslim-majority countries and neighboring states should urge China to respect the rights of minorities and cease their persecution of Uyghurs. All UN member states should ban goods produced with forced labor in China.



At least 5.6 million people internally displaced

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Various armed groups in the Democratic Republic of the Congo continue to perpetrate crimes against humanity, resulting in the largest displacement crisis in Africa.

BACKGROUND

Attacks by armed groups and recurring inter-communal violence continue to threaten populations in the eastern provinces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), where more than 120 militias and other armed groups actively operate. According to the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), at least 5.6 million Congolese are internally displaced while at least 1 million have fled to neighboring countries, making this the largest displacement crisis in Africa.

The UN Joint Human Rights Office (UNJHRO) in the DRC documented at least 2,024 civilians killed during 2021 by armed groups in North Kivu, South Kivu, Tanganyika and Ituri provinces. Despite military offensives conducted by the government's armed forces (FARDC), with assistance from the UN peacekeeping mission (MONUSCO), inter-communal violence and targeted attacks have escalated in the eastern provinces over the past year. The civilian death toll nearly doubled since

the government launched a so-called “state of siege” in North Kivu and Ituri provinces in May 2021. Between February–June 2022 UNHCR recorded over 800 deaths from firearm attacks and machete raids by armed groups in Ituri alone. At least 715 of the victims had been sheltering in sites for internally displaced persons (IDPs) or were killed as they returned home after previously fleeing violence. During July a week of protests in North Kivu and South Kivu over MONUSCO’s inability to curb rising insecurity resulted in at least 36 people killed, including 4 UN peacekeepers and 32 protesters.

The Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) armed group has been perpetrating atrocities in the Beni region of North Kivu for eight years and has increased their attacks on civilians in North Kivu and Ituri despite the state of siege. UNJHRO has reported that attacks by the ADF have been “systematic and brutal” and may amount to crimes against humanity and war crimes. Since January 2021 the ADF has summarily executed at least 1,500 civilians in Beni, Mambasa and Irumu territories.

In Ituri other armed groups, particularly factions of the Cooperative for the Development of Congo (CODECO) – a predominantly ethnic Lendu armed group – have perpetrated widespread attacks on villages, killing hundreds of mostly ethnic Hema villagers. Since November 2021, CODECO fighters have committed a series of attacks on IDP sites in Djugu territory marked by killings, kidnappings, looting of livestock and food, and torching of homes.

In Rutshuru and Nyiragongo territories, North Kivu, the March 23 Movement (M23) – an armed group previously defeated by the FARDC in 2013 – launched a series of attacks targeting military positions in November 2021. During clashes the FARDC and M23 have engaged in indiscriminate shelling and driven more than 190,000 civilians to flee since March. According to the UNSC-mandated Panel of Experts, as of July the group controlled a territory nearly three times as large as it did in March and has attacked villages and summarily killed civilians in areas under its control.

ANALYSIS

For nearly 30 years various armed groups have exploited the weakness of state authority to perpetrate attacks against civilians. Widespread violence in eastern DRC is indicative of the enduring challenge of building effective governance and stability. The volume of attacks, combined with inter-communal tensions, is straining the capacity of the FARDC and MONUSCO to provide adequate protection to civilians. The redeployment of the FARDC to fight against M23 has created further power vacuums and exacerbated the fragile security environment in Ituri and North Kivu. The escalation of ethnically motivated and deliberate attacks by armed groups against IDPs has led to new waves of displacement.

The resurgence of M23 has aggravated regional tensions, particularly between the governments of DRC and Rwanda, and risks further escalation. The Panel of Experts found evidence of Rwandan military operations in eastern DRC

since November 2021 and of Rwandan troops having violated sanctions by providing M23 fighters with weapons, ammunition and uniforms. Prior to the release of the report, a dramatic increase in hate speech and incitement to discrimination and violence, particularly targeting Rwandan individuals, had already raised the risk of atrocities.

The Hema and Lendu have a longstanding history of disputes over access to land and resources, including fighting that started in the late 1990s and resulted in thousands of deaths.

Rampant impunity and competition for control of profitable minerals have enabled the proliferation of armed groups. While the FARDC has initiated offensives against various militias, groups like the ADF have a history of violent reprisals targeting civilians. The FARDC and police have also been implicated in widespread violations of IHL and IHRL, including sexual violence and arbitrarily killings, while combatting armed groups. Some state security forces have been implicated in violations that may amount to crimes against humanity and war crimes.

The DRC government is struggling to uphold its responsibility to protect, and government forces have at times been complicit in atrocity crimes.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

The UNSC currently subjects 9 entities and 36 individuals in the DRC to sanctions. Since 2013 the government of the DRC and neighboring states have collectively addressed the threat of armed groups through the “Peace, Security and Cooperation [PSC] Framework for the DRC and the region.”

On 20 December 2021 the UNSC passed Resolution 2612, extending the mandate of MONUSCO for one year. The resolution emphasized that the government “bears the primary responsibility to protect civilians within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction, including protection from crimes against humanity and war crimes.”

On 21 April 2022 the East African Community (EAC), which the DRC had joined a month prior, agreed to establish a regional military force to combat violence in the east. In June the EAC agreed to send thousands of troops to the region to address the emergence of M23. Burundi deployed troops in August.

In June the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Secretary-General’s Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide expressed alarm at the escalation of inflammatory rhetoric in the country, stating that, “hateful messages heighten the risk of violence, including atrocity crimes targeting specific groups of people.”

NECESSARY ACTION

The DRC government and MONUSCO must ensure that protecting civilians remains their primary priority as they address the ongoing threat posed by various armed groups. The DRC government and MONUSCO should enact measures

to re-establish trust with communities, including by consulting with civilian populations and civil society about protection needs.

MONUSCO, OHCHR and the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide should continue to mobilize local, provincial and national authorities, as well as journalists and civil society, to condemn hate speech and the stigmatization and racial profiling of communities.

The government must cooperate with UNJHRO and ensure all state agents responsible for human rights violations and abuses are held accountable. The DRC government should implement a vetting process within the FARDC to identify and provisionally remove individuals who may have been implicated in serious human rights violations from their post while cases are pending.

The government, with the support of MONUSCO, should implement measures to mediate inter-communal tensions in eastern DRC and address structural issues of land access, resource allocation and poor governance. Neighboring states should continue to uphold the PSC Framework and provide assistance in confronting armed groups. The DRC government and neighboring states should pursue regional diplomacy and dialogue to ease tensions.



13 million people in need of aid
in Tigray, Amhara and Afar

ETHIOPIA

Parties to the conflict in the Tigray, Amhara and Afar regions have perpetrated possible war crimes and crimes against humanity. Populations across Ethiopia are also at risk as a result of ethnic violence.

BACKGROUND

Clashes between the Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF) and the Tigray Defense Forces (TDF) have been ongoing in Ethiopia since the federal government and its allies launched a military offensive against forces loyal to the regional governing Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) during November 2020. Conflict in the Tigray region has likely killed tens of thousands

of people and internally displaced over 2.1 million. Since fighting spread to the neighboring Afar and Amhara regions in July 2021, at least 840,000 people have been forcibly displaced, including over 300,000 between January-February 2022. According to the regional authorities in Amhara, almost 7,000 civilians were killed in the region by TDF forces between June-December 2021. Representatives of the TPLF have refuted the claims. A tentative humanitarian ceasefire was reached in March 2022, but fighting has since resumed.

On 3 November 2021 OHCHR and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission released a joint report, finding that all parties to the conflict – the ENDF and allied Eritrean forces, the TDF, Amhara regional forces and affiliated militias – have committed violations of international law that may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity. Widespread violations of IHL and IHRL have been committed throughout the conflict, including indiscriminate bombings and attacks on civilians, ethnic-based killings, sexual violence, forced displacement, use of child soldiers, and the systematic destruction of food, water and healthcare systems. Numerous cultural heritage sites, as well as camps in Tigray hosting Eritrean refugees, have been destroyed and looted. Government forces have also arrested reporters and journalists en masse, inhibiting independent coverage of the conflict.

Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch also alleged that Amhara regional forces and militias, with the acquiescence and possible participation of Ethiopian federal authorities, perpetrated war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing in Western Tigray. While tens of thousands of Tigrayans fled Western Tigray, Amhara authorities reportedly attempted to coerce those that remained to leave by subjecting them to ethnically targeted restrictions. Amhara authorities also organized transportation that took Tigrayans out of Amhara-controlled areas in Western Tigray, confiscated their documents and warned them not to return while simultaneously calling for the settlement of Amhara residents into the area.

There has also been an alarming rate of ethnic-based hate speech and profiling, particularly against Tigrayans. According to OHCHR, from 9-16 November 2021 more than 1,000 Tigrayans were arrested, including dozens of UN staff and subcontractors delivering aid. Thousands of Tigrayans reportedly also remain in overcrowded detention facilities across Ethiopia.

The conflict has caused a humanitarian catastrophe to unfold across northern Ethiopia, with at least 13 million people in urgent need of aid. Humanitarian convoys have routinely been blocked, attacked and looted by parties to the conflict and 23 aid workers have been killed since November 2020. Armed men entered the World Food Programme (WFP) compound in Mekelle in August 2022 and seized 12 tankers filled with fuel needed for humanitarian operations. A historic drought in the Horn of Africa has further exacerbated the humanitarian crisis.

Inter-communal and inter-religious violence, as well as regional border disputes, have also become increasingly frequent in

other parts of Ethiopia. In Oromia, regional security forces and the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) armed group have allegedly committed enforced disappearances and attacks on civilians, including ethnic Amharas. On 18 June at least 400 Amhara civilians were summarily executed by suspected OLA militants in Tole, western Oromia region. Around 500,000 people remain displaced due to ongoing violence.

To address the increasing polarization between ethnic groups, on 29 December the Federal Parliamentary Assembly voted to establish a commission to hold a national dialogue. The process does not currently include the TPLF or OLA.

ANALYSIS

All parties to the conflict bear responsibility for potential war crimes and crimes against humanity, while Amhara forces have been implicated in acts of ethnic cleansing. Civilians in Tigray, Afar and Amhara remain at risk of further atrocities due to repeated violations of IHL and IHRL. Inflammatory statements by regional and federal government leaders, including Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, may fuel further ethnic conflict.

Ethiopia's ethnic-based federalist system has resulted in widespread allegations of ethnic favoritism. Under the former TPLF-dominated ruling coalition, which controlled the government for 27 years prior to Prime Minister Abiy coming to power in 2018, many groups felt marginalized. A history of impunity for past human rights abuses by security forces has also deepened distrust between ethnic groups. This history, coupled with increasing political and social polarization, could lead to further ethnically motivated violence across Ethiopia.

The Ethiopian government has failed to uphold its responsibility to protect all populations in Ethiopia, regardless of ethnicity.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

Since November 2020 the UN, Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and AU have condemned the violence in Tigray. The federal government has rejected multiple offers by the AU and IGAD to mediate the conflict. Both the UNSC and the AU's Peace and Security Council have called for a comprehensive ceasefire and an end to incitement and hate speech.

The EU has withheld 88 million euros in budgetary aid to Ethiopia due to the human rights situation in Tigray. On 12 November 2021 the US imposed sanctions on Eritrean officials and entities obstructing humanitarian aid and committing grave abuses in Tigray. On 1 January 2022 the US suspended Ethiopia from preferential trade status for gross human rights violations.

On 17 December the HRC held a special session and mandated the creation of an International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia (ICHREE) to investigate allegations of violations and abuses of IHL and IHRL during the conflict.

The UN Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide released multiple statements throughout 2021, expressing alarm at the

ethnic violence in Ethiopia and has called on government officials to end the use of hate speech.

NECESSARY ACTION

All parties to the conflict in northern Ethiopia must operate in strict adherence with IHL and ensure the protection of civilians and refugees. Parties should agree to an immediate full-scale ceasefire with no preconditions and allow unfettered delivery of emergency aid, including fuel and medical supplies. The proposed national dialogue should include all parties in Ethiopia to holistically address the root causes of recurrent inter-communal and ethnic conflicts across the country.

The international community must support efforts to negotiate a ceasefire. The UNSC should impose an arms embargo and sanctions on those prolonging the conflict and committing atrocities. Eritrean forces should immediately withdraw from Ethiopia.

All parties to the conflict should cooperate with the ICHREE and allow it to carry out its mandate. UN member states should support the renewal of the ICHREE's mandate at the upcoming 51st session of the HRC and fully fund the Commission's work. The Ethiopian government must allow the ICHREE unfettered access to all conflict areas.



Over 1,200 Palestinians forcibly displaced in the Occupied West Bank in 2021

ISRAEL AND THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY

Populations in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory endure recurring war crimes and crimes against humanity, including the crime of apartheid.

BACKGROUND

Palestinian territory – encompassing the Gaza Strip and West Bank, including East Jerusalem – has been illegally occupied by Israel since 1967. An institutionalized regime of systematic racial oppression has been established through a two-tiered

legal and political system, providing comprehensive rights for Jewish Israeli settlers while imposing military rule and control on Palestinians without any basic protections or rights under international law. The Israeli government has also engaged in a regular practice of inhumane acts, as well as extrajudicial killings, torture, denial of fundamental human rights, arbitrary detention and collective punishment.

According to a March 2022 report by the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), Israel's political system of entrenched rule in the OPT satisfies the prevailing evidentiary standard for the existence of the crime of apartheid. The Special Rapporteur previously determined in July 2021 that Israel's 55-year occupation has been characterized by settlement expansion that aims to permanently alter the ethnic demographics of East Jerusalem and amounts to a war crime. The HRC-mandated Col on the OPT, including East Jerusalem, and Israel reported in June 2022 that the continued occupation of Palestinian territory, as well as discrimination against Palestinians, are the key causes of recurrent instability and protraction of conflict in the region.

There are close to 300 illegal settlements in Occupied East Jerusalem and the West Bank with approximately 700,000 Israeli settlers. According to OCHA, at least 419 Palestinian-owned structures have been demolished or seized by Israeli government authorities in 2022 so far, forcibly displacing over 535 Palestinians. In 2021 violence perpetrated by Israeli settlers against Palestinians reached the highest level ever recorded, with over 490 attacks directed against rural Palestinian families. The attacks included physical violence, shooting with live ammunition, torching of fields and livestock, theft and vandalization of property.

Meanwhile, Israel's ongoing air, sea and land blockade of Gaza has been in place for over 15 years and has inflicted collective punishment on 2 million Palestinians, facilitating a humanitarian crisis. Israeli authorities periodically shut down the crossings into Gaza, preventing the flow of people, medical cases and essential commodities, including food. Closures in early August resulted in severe shortages of fuel, forcing the Gaza Power Plant to shut down. Hamas' security forces have also committed grave abuses against Palestinian civilians in Gaza, including arbitrary arrests, summary executions and torture.

Over 170 Palestinians were injured and at least 300 detained during large-scale raids by Israeli police from 15-22 April 2022 at the al-Aqsa Mosque compound in East Jerusalem. Israeli police used disproportionate force, tear gas, stun grenades and rubber bullets to forcefully remove Palestinians. These events were similar to raids carried out by Israeli forces in May 2021 when, following weeks of escalating tensions and protests, over 1,000 Palestinians were injured from 7-10 May. Subsequent indiscriminate rocket fire by Hamas and airstrikes by Israel killed and injured over 2,170 Palestinians in Gaza and killed at least 12 Israelis from 10-21 May 2021. In early August 2022 the Israeli government launched indiscriminate airstrikes in Gaza, killing and injuring nearly 400 Palestinians, including dozens of children.

OHCHR also continues to document assaults, intimidation, gender-based violence, harassment, excessive use of force, arbitrary arrests and censorship of Palestinian journalists and human rights defenders throughout occupied Palestine. Regular violent incidents have injured and at times killed Palestinian journalists.

ANALYSIS

The systematic nature of human rights violations and inhumane acts in the OPT likely amounts to crimes against humanity while the collective punishment of Palestinians as a coercive measure of population control may amount to a war crime. Under the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid and the Rome Statute of the ICC, apartheid is a crime against humanity. Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention also prohibits an occupying power from transferring parts of its civilian population into occupied territory, also known as "settler implantation." Seizures and demolitions of Palestinian and Bedouin land and property leave communities at heightened risk of forced evictions, arbitrary displacement and forcible transfer.

Israel's use of force against Palestinians during the April 2022 raids appears to have been widespread and indiscriminate. Impunity for cycles of violence has entrenched a system of structural oppression against Palestinians in Gaza and the Occupied West Bank. There has been no accountability for likely war crimes committed during the 2014 Gaza war between Hamas and Israel, for disproportionate and deadly use of force by Israeli soldiers in response to protests along the Gaza border during 2018-2019, nor for airstrikes during the May 2021 escalation that appear to have deliberately ignored the principles of proportionality and distinction. There has also been no accountability for potential crimes perpetrated by Hamas and Palestinian armed groups, including indiscriminate rockets fired during May 2021.

Israel, the Hamas de-facto administration and the Palestinian Authority are all obligated to uphold their responsibility to protect.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

On 23 December 2016 the UNSC adopted a resolution reaffirming that Israeli settlements in the OPT violate international law. This was the first and only UNSC resolution adopted on Israel and the OPT since 2009. Between 10-21 May 2021 the UNSC made three attempts to condemn the violence and call for a ceasefire, but the US blocked each effort.

Following a May 2018 referral by the Palestinian Authority, on 5 February 2021 the Pre-Trial Chamber of the ICC confirmed that the Court's jurisdiction extends to Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. On 4 March 2021 the ICC officially opened its investigation.

On 27 May 2021 the HRC voted to establish a Col with an unprecedented open-ended mandate to investigate violations

of international law in the OPT and Israel and identify the root causes of recurring conflict.

NECESSARY ACTION

Israel must lift the blockade on Gaza and cease illegal settlement-related activity and apartheid policies. It should also end the occupation of Palestinian territory and collective punishment of Palestinians. Israeli authorities must cooperate with all UN-mandated investigative mechanisms. All parties should condemn anti-Semitic and anti-Arab hate speech and cooperate fully with the investigations of the ICC and Col.

All parties must work toward a sustainable political solution consistent with international law and various UNSC resolutions. States with strong political and economic ties to Israel, the Palestinian Authority or Hamas, should push for a lasting political solution to the conflict, accountability for potential war crimes and crimes against humanity, and the protection of human rights for all civilians, regardless of ethnicity or religion.

The international community should impose accountability measures for violations of international law in Israel and the OPT. The ICC should investigate all potential war crimes or crimes against humanity perpetrated in the OPT, including the crime of apartheid.



Over 2,200 people have been killed and at least 12,000 people remain detained since 1 February 2021

MYANMAR (BURMA)

Populations in Myanmar are facing crimes against humanity and war crimes perpetrated by the military following the February 2021 coup.

BACKGROUND

On 1 February 2021 Myanmar's (Burma) military – the Tatmadaw – led by Commander-in-Chief Min Aung Hlaing, overthrew the country's civilian-led government and declared a state of emergency. Since then, hundreds of thousands of people have participated in peaceful protests and strikes against the re-

imposition of military rule, while numerous civilian militias – known as People's Defence Forces (PDFs) – have also formed as part of an armed resistance.

According to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, more than 2,200 people have been killed by the security forces since February 2021 and over 12,000 people remain detained for resisting the coup. At least 110 people have been sentenced to death by military tribunals. In July 2022 the military executed four men in the first executions in the country since 1988. The military has charged members of the National Unity Government (NUG) – a coalition of democratic opponents formed in opposition to military rule – with high treason and pronounced that the NUG and PDFs are terrorist organizations.

The Tatmadaw has targeted civilian areas with airstrikes, scorched earth campaigns and other attacks, particularly in the opposition strongholds of Magway and Sagaing regions and Chin, Kachin, Shan, Kayah and Karen states, resulting in civilian casualties and mass displacement. According to OCHA, an estimated 18,000 civilian properties have been burned or destroyed since the coup. Amnesty International has documented evidence of the Tatmadaw systematically laying antipersonnel landmines in homes, on farmland and on church grounds in Kayah State. In addition to its widespread use of internet shutdowns, the military also reportedly plans to increase its use of surveillance technology with facial recognition capabilities throughout the country.

The former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, and the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Tom Andrews, have indicated that abuses committed by the military since the coup likely amount to crimes against humanity and war crimes. In August 2022 the UN's Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar (IIMM) provided evidence of continued crimes against humanity.

An estimated 14.4 million people are in need of humanitarian aid. Nearly 866,400 people have been displaced since the coup, particularly in the northwest and southeast, bringing the estimated total number of IDPs to over 1.2 million.

In 2018 the HRC-mandated FFM on Myanmar concluded that senior members of the military, including General Min Aung Hlaing, should be prosecuted for genocide against the Rohingya ethnic group, as well as for crimes against humanity and war crimes in Kachin, Rakhine and Shan states. In 2019 the FFM also asserted that Myanmar "continues to harbor genocidal intent" toward the Rohingya.

The majority of Myanmar's Rohingya population were forced to flee the country after the military launched "clearance operations" in Rakhine State in August 2017, bringing the total number of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh to over 900,000 people. The estimated 600,000 Rohingya who remain in Rakhine State face severe violations of their universal human rights. The 1982 Citizenship Law rendered most Rohingya stateless.

ANALYSIS

Myanmar's armed forces previously ruled the country from 1962-2011, overseeing the violent repression of the democracy movement and waging war against several ethnic armed groups. Impunity for past atrocities has enabled the military to continue committing widespread and systematic human rights violations and abuses against civilians, particularly those from ethnic minority populations.

The risk of further atrocities remains high as the Tatmadaw continues to target civilians and the armed resistance in what appears to be a widespread and systematic scorched earth campaign. The use of banned landmines threatens the lives and livelihoods of civilians in contaminated areas. The Tatmadaw's reported use of surveillance technology and internet shutdowns appears to be an attempt to strengthen its hold on power, as well as to help facilitate the perpetration of atrocities and shield itself from accountability.

The coup complicates the prospects for the safe, dignified and voluntary repatriation of Rohingya refugees from Bangladesh. Given its history, the military is unlikely to address the denial of citizenship for the Rohingya or accountability for past atrocities.

Myanmar's military has manifestly failed to uphold its responsibility to protect and bears responsibility for the commission of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

The only formal response by the UNSC to the genocide against the Rohingya was the adoption of a Presidential Statement on 6 November 2017 that stressed the "primary responsibility of the Myanmar government to protect its population."

Numerous mechanisms have been created to investigate and potentially hold accountable perpetrators of crimes against the Rohingya. This includes the IIMM, an ICC investigation into crimes against humanity that may have resulted in the forced deportation of the Rohingya across the Myanmar-Bangladesh border, and a trial at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) initiated by The Gambia in November 2019, accusing Myanmar of violating its obligations under the Genocide Convention. In July 2022 the ICJ rejected Myanmar's preliminary objections, guaranteeing that the case can proceed. Several states have announced their intention to intervene in the case, including Canada, Germany, Netherlands and UK. On 26 November 2021 Argentina's judiciary opened a case under the principle of universal jurisdiction. In March 2022 the US government formally determined that the violence perpetrated by the Tatmadaw against the Rohingya constituted genocide and crimes against humanity.

Since the coup, the UNSC has privately met 11 times on Myanmar and adopted 10 statements but has taken no substantial action. On 18 June 2021 the UN General Assembly (UNGA) adopted a resolution calling for the immediate release of all political

detainees and for all member states to prevent the flow of arms into Myanmar.

On 24 April 2021 the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) agreed to a "Five-Point Consensus," but it has not been effectively implemented.

A number of governments have imposed targeted sanctions in response to the coup, including Canada, UK, US and the EU. The EU also suspended development funds. Oil conglomerates TotalEnergies and Chevron announced in January 2022 their withdrawal over the human rights crisis. The Republic of Korea restricted military exports and suspended defense exchanges.

The UN Special Envoy on Myanmar, Noeleen Heyzer, traveled to Myanmar for the first time in August 2022 and engaged with the junta.

NECESSARY ACTION

The UNSC should impose a comprehensive arms embargo on Myanmar and refer the situation to the ICC. China, Russia, Serbia and India must halt weapons transfers to Myanmar's military.

ASEAN member states should condemn the Tatmadaw and increasingly engage with the NUG. The military junta should not be diplomatically recognized as the legitimate representatives of Myanmar.

All UN member states, regional organizations and the UNSC should impose economic sanctions on Myanmar's oil and gas sector, particularly the Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise. Foreign companies should immediately divest and sever ties with all businesses linked to Myanmar's military.

More states should formally intervene in the ICJ case. General Min Aung Hlaing and other senior military leaders who bear responsibility for atrocity crimes should face international justice.



13 million people displaced
after 11 years of conflict

SYRIA

Populations in Syria continue to face war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by various state forces and non-state armed groups.

BACKGROUND

Since the armed conflict between the government and opposition groups in Syria began in 2011 at least 580,000 people have been killed. OHCHR has estimated 306,887 civilian deaths from 1 March 2011 to 31 March 2021 in Syria. The HRC-mandated CoI on Syria has reported more than 130,000 arbitrary detentions, abductions or disappearances since 2011, with the majority attributable to the Syrian government. Nearly 13 million people have been displaced, including 6.7 million Syrian refugees. An estimated 14.6 million Syrians remain in need of humanitarian assistance and 12 million people are food insecure.

While various parties to the conflict continue to perpetrate serious violations and abuses of international law, over the last two years the conflict has shifted away from large-scale military hostilities along major frontlines to regional clashes between armed groups and government forces. Various groups also perpetrate violations in areas under their control.

In southern Syria, particularly in Dara'a governorate, clashes have been ongoing since July 2021 between government forces and armed opposition groups. A ceasefire was reached on 1 September 2021, but quickly unraveled as Syrian government forces continued to launch raids, airstrikes and missile attacks. The government has also besieged towns and imposed heavy restrictions on civilians attempting to flee and on the delivery of humanitarian aid. Government forces also continue to commit murder, torture and sexual violence as a matter of state policy.

Despite a ceasefire in northwest Syria, brokered in March 2020 between Russia and Türkiye, hostilities and violations have continued in Idlib governorate. Ground fighting, shelling and airstrikes – perpetrated by forces loyal to the Syrian

government – have damaged medical facilities, markets, schools and displacement camps. According to the CoI, the attacks have caused dozens of civilian deaths and greatly reduced access to food, water, healthcare and adequate housing. The armed extremist group Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham also continues to perpetrate abuses, including arbitrarily detaining activists and journalists.

Elsewhere in northern Syria, the Syrian National Army (SNA) and other Turkish-backed armed groups have perpetrated torture, sexual violence, systematic looting and arbitrary detention. IEDs are frequently detonated in crowded areas and have killed and wounded hundreds of civilians over the past year. Meanwhile, indiscriminate shelling and government airstrikes have hit civilian objects in recent months, causing dozens of casualties. Ongoing hostilities between the SNA and the Kurdish-backed Syrian Defense Forces (SDF) continue to adversely impact civilians.

At least 40,000 children of alleged so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) fighters from 57 countries remain trapped in squalid detention camps run by the SDF. Meanwhile, the government is imposing arbitrary restrictions on freedom of movement and depriving individuals of their property in areas previously held by the opposition, which the CoI alleges may amount to the war crime of collective punishment. Government forces have reportedly subjected civilians returning to Syria to arbitrary detention, enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings and torture.

ANALYSIS

For over a decade the government of Syria, its allies and armed opposition groups have all perpetrated attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, blatantly disregarding international law. The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons has documented the illegal use of chemical weapons by the Syrian government and some armed groups since 2013.

All parties to the conflict continue to commit acts that may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity. As various armed groups attempt to consolidate their control over territory in a fragmented Syria, civilians are facing indiscriminate hostilities, as well as widespread and systematic human rights violations. The Syrian government and other parties to the conflict continue to perpetrate detention and disappearance as a strategy to control and intimidate civilians. Ongoing violations of various ceasefire agreements greatly increase the risk of recurrence of large-scale conflict.

The grave situation across Syria is partly a consequence of the inability of the UNSC to hold perpetrators accountable. The Syrian government has directly violated various UNSC resolutions, and Russia has systematically shielded Syria from international accountability measures.

The government of Syria has manifestly failed to uphold its responsibility to protect and bears primary responsibility for the ongoing commission of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

Since 2013 the UNSC has passed 27 resolutions on humanitarian access, peace talks and chemical weapons in Syria. Several refer to the government's responsibility to protect populations, but none have been fully implemented. Despite this, Russia and China have jointly vetoed ten draft resolutions on Syria and Russia has independently vetoed an additional seven. On 12 July 2022 the UNSC extended authorization for cross-border humanitarian aid through one crossing for six months.

The UN Secretary-General and others have repeatedly called for the UNSC to refer the situation in Syria to the ICC. However, vetoes from Russia and China have blocked UNSC action.

On 21 December 2016 the UNGA voted to establish an International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to assist in the investigation and prosecution of perpetrators of atrocities in Syria. A number of countries have also initiated domestic legal proceedings against suspected Syrian perpetrators under universal jurisdiction. On 24 February 2021 a German court delivered the first conviction of a member of Syria's intelligence services, Eyad A., for complicity in crimes against humanity. Nearly a year later, on 13 January 2022, the same court convicted Anwar R., a high-ranking former Syrian government official, of crimes against humanity. On 19 January another German court opened a trial involving allegations of torture and murder by a Syrian state agent.

On 18 September 2020 the government of the Netherlands formally requested negotiations with the Syrian government as a first step toward holding Syria accountable for violations of the UN Convention against Torture. The government of Canada issued a similar request on 4 March 2021.

On 21 April 2021 a majority of States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention voted to suspend Syria's rights and privileges under the treaty.

NECESSARY ACTION

All parties to the conflict must uphold their obligations under IHL and IHRL, including ending attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, and facilitate unimpeded humanitarian access to civilians trapped or displaced by fighting. All parties should also uphold the ceasefire agreements in the northwest, northeast and south. A timetable for the release of all detainees and abductees should be established.

The return of refugees and other displaced Syrians must be in accordance with the principle of non-refoulement. Syrian authorities must ensure the protection of all returnees.

UN member states should continue to pursue accountability for alleged perpetrators of atrocities in Syria under universal jurisdiction. UN member states must also work toward the establishment of an independent international mechanism to clarify the fate and whereabouts of those missing and disappeared in Syria. The UNSC should also refer the situation in Syria to the ICC.



Over 17.2 million people in need
of humanitarian assistance

UKRAINE

Russian forces have perpetrated possible war crimes and crimes against humanity during their invasion in Ukraine. Ukrainian and Russian forces have also committed potential crimes in the Donbas region since 2014.

BACKGROUND

Since 24 February 2022, when Russian Armed Forces invaded Ukraine, cities and towns in central, eastern and southern Ukraine have been bombarded with indiscriminate explosive weapons, causing a massive humanitarian and human rights crisis. The UN has verified more than 5,580 civilian deaths, including over 360 children, while emphasizing the toll is likely thousands higher. The crisis has displaced over 14 million people, including more than 6 million who have fled to other countries.

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has stated that Russia's actions in Ukraine may amount to war crimes. The UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine has documented the widespread use of indiscriminate weapons in populated areas, including shelling from heavy artillery and multiple launch rocket systems, missiles, airstrikes and illegal cluster munitions, as Russian forces advance on major cities, including the capital, Kyiv. Schools, homes, water and sanitation systems and civilian shelters have been directly and routinely targeted. Buses and convoys have also been targeted, violating agreed upon humanitarian corridors. The World Health Organization has verified at least 460 attacks on health care during the conflict. Russian forces have also bombed Ukrainian historical, religious and cultural sites.

In areas under their control, Russian forces have perpetrated grave abuses, including summary executions and other possible war crimes. Over 1,000 bodies were discovered in previously Russian occupied territory around Kyiv, some of which had been buried in mass graves. Ukrainian officials reported that many had been fatally shot and/or bound and blindfolded before being killed. In Mariupol an estimated 600 people were killed on 16 March when Russian forces launched an airstrike on the

city's Drama Theater. There have also been reports of forced deportations of Ukrainians, including children, to Russia, as well as torture, rape and sexual violence, and forcible disappearances of local Ukrainian government officials.

Following the retreat of Russian forces from areas in central Ukraine, on 19 April Russia launched an offensive focused on parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts in eastern Ukraine, an area collectively known as Donbas. The majority of infrastructure in the conflict areas of Luhansk has reportedly been destroyed by fighting. Since Russian President Vladimir Putin claimed victory over the Luhansk region on 4 July, Russian forces have redirected their efforts to Donetsk. On 1 August Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky ordered the evacuation of the 200,000 civilians from Ukraine-controlled territory.

Prior to the 24 February invasion, conflict had been ongoing in Donbas since 2014. Fighting began after a pro-European change of power in Kyiv prompted the Russian government to begin militarily supporting majority-ethnic Russian separatists in Donbas' eastern most areas. The resulting armed conflict between the separatists and the Ukrainian government has killed 14,000 people and displaced millions. Multiple rounds of peace agreements have failed to resolve the conflict.

International monitors have documented both sides committing violations in Donbas that may amount to war crimes, including torture, indiscriminately shelling civilian areas and using indiscriminate weapons.

ANALYSIS

Russian forces have perpetrated widespread violations of IHL and IHRL, some of which may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity. Civilians in Ukraine continue to be at risk of further atrocities as Russian forces wantonly shell residential buildings and other civilian infrastructure as part of their campaign to control territory and reinforce defensive positions.

While the invasion began on 24 February, the crisis has myriad historical, political, security and economic root causes. President Putin has repeatedly asserted his belief that Russia and Ukraine are one and the same given their shared history and cultural similarities, a notion Ukrainians largely reject. Nevertheless, President Putin's claims of Ukrainian forces committing genocide against ethnic Russian populations in Donbas have been largely rebuked by international monitors present in the region who have found no evidence of such actions.

The conflict has global implications resulting from economic sanctions and Russia and Ukraine's role as major exporters of grain and cooking oils. More than half of the WFP's wheat supply is provided by Russia and Ukraine. Increasing scarcity and costs have impeded aid operations for vulnerable populations worldwide, as well as put more pressure on populations prone to resource-related conflict.

Ukraine needs continued international support to be able to effectively uphold its responsibility to protect its population.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

Russia's aggression in Ukraine has been widely condemned by states, as well as regional and intergovernmental organizations, many of which have also responded with unprecedented targeted sanctions and other economic measures. Hundreds of multinational corporations have ceased operations in Russia. Many countries have closed their airspace to Russian airlines while some states have provided Ukraine's military with weapons.

Following Russia's veto of a draft UNSC resolution on 25 February, the Council adopted a "Uniting for Peace" resolution, allowing the UNGA to give recommendations. On 2 March, during an emergency special session, the UNGA condemned Russia's use of force in Ukraine and the subsequent violations of IHL and IHRL. The UNGA also passed a resolution demanding humanitarian access to civilians in need and on 7 April voted to suspend Russia from its seat on the HRC.

On 26 February Ukraine filed a case with the ICJ, asking for the Court's clarification under Article IX of the Genocide Convention. On 16 March the ICJ imposed provisional measures, calling on Russia to suspend military operations and for military units to cease advancing, as well as calling on all parties to refrain from actions furthering the conflict.

On 2 March the Chief Prosecutor of the ICC opened an investigation into the situation in Ukraine. The Court previously found evidence of war crimes and crimes against humanity during a preliminary examination of protests in 2013 and the armed conflict in Donbas.

On 4 March the HRC established a Col to investigate systematic violations and abuses of IHRL and IHL. On 12 May the HRC adopted a resolution requesting the Col to investigate crimes committed around Kyiv, Chernihiv, Kharkiv and Sumy in line with its mandate.

Russian and Ukrainian delegations have met in numerous rounds of negotiations, but have made limited progress. During April UN Secretary-General António Guterres traveled to Moscow and Kyiv in an attempt to broker peace. In August Secretary-General Guterres traveled to Lviv and Odesa.

On 22 July Russia and Ukraine signed a deal, facilitated by Türkiye and the UN, allowing for the resumption of exports of grain from Ukraine, as well as fertilizer and grain from Russia to global markets.

NECESSARY ACTION

All parties to the conflict must strictly adhere to IHL and ensure the protection of civilians in conflict areas. In the absence of a negotiated resolution to the conflict, parties should agree to an immediate ceasefire to allow civilians to flee besieged areas and for the unfettered delivery of aid.

All violations of IHL and IHRL must be investigated and the perpetrators held accountable. Legal proceedings for those accused of crimes during the conflict must be transparent

and respect international standards of due process and proportionality.

Amidst the deepening crisis, the international community must continue to increase its pressure on Russian authorities to halt their advances in line with the ICJ's provisional measures. The international community should also maintain its support to Ukraine in upholding its international obligations to protect its populations, including by ensuring the territorial integrity of the country.



More than 6 million people have left the country since 2014

VENEZUELA

Ongoing systematic human rights violations in Venezuela may amount to crimes against humanity.

BACKGROUND

Since at least 2014 Venezuelan security and intelligence forces have perpetrated arbitrary detention, short-term enforced disappearances, torture and ill-treatment and sexual and gender-based violence, largely targeting actual and perceived government opponents. Various state agents have also allegedly perpetrated thousands of extrajudicial killings in the name of combatting crime. According to the Venezuelan human rights project, Lupa Por la Vida, at least 1,414 killings were carried out in 2021 alone. The government has also taken steps to restrict civic space and limit the operations of human rights defenders, independent media and civil society, including through harassment and persecution.

In September 2020 the HRC-mandated FFM on Venezuela warned that patterns of violations and abuses since at least 2014 were authorized at the highest level of government and committed as part of a “widespread and systematic attack” against the civilian population that may amount to crimes against humanity. In December 2020 the Chief Prosecutor of the ICC asserted that there are reasonable grounds to believe that crimes against humanity have been committed since at least April 2017. An investigation was opened in November 2021.

In September 2021 the FFM warned that Venezuela’s judicial system is perpetuating impunity for possible atrocities. Despite efforts by the government to minimize international scrutiny, the FFM further warned on 18 March 2022 that domestic investigations remain limited in scope and only target low-level perpetrators.

Communities along Venezuela’s border with Colombia and other areas of the country are also at heightened risk of egregious abuses by non-state armed groups or criminal gangs, acting at times with the consent and direct involvement of Venezuelan state agents. Regular clashes between armed groups along the border have resulted in mass displacement, civilian fatalities, disappearances and the forced recruitment of children.

Following years of the gradual erosion of the rule of law and democratic space, the situation in Venezuela escalated in 2014 when mass protests erupted in response to insecurity, hyperinflation and a lack of essential services. Security forces reacted with disproportionate force, torture and sexual violence. State agents responded with similar patterns of violations and abuses during subsequent mass protests, including in 2019 when the start of President Nicolás Maduro’s second term sparked an intense struggle with the leader of the then opposition-controlled National Assembly, Juan Guaidó, causing a protracted political crisis. More than 6 million people have left the country since 2014 in what has become the largest migration crisis in Latin America.

ANALYSIS

The Venezuelan government is pursuing policies that enable systematic human rights violations and abuses in an apparent attempt to silence dissent. Extrajudicial killings appear to be part of a systematic strategy to reinforce social control. The number of killings reduced following the publication of the FFM’s first report in September 2020, suggesting a possible deterrent effect of international scrutiny. However, state security forces have continued their targeted repression and systematic abuses. Government-linked media outlets play a key role in state repression and persecution.

The limited actions taken by the national judicial system emboldens state agents to continue perpetrating possible crimes against humanity, including politically motivated arbitrary detentions and torture. The ICC’s decision to open an investigation is an important step in advancing accountability efforts in light of the government’s unwillingness to investigate high-level perpetrators. Continued independent, impartial scrutiny, including by the FFM, remains essential for ensuring accountability and preventing further atrocities.

The run-up to presidential elections in 2024 poses a serious risk of heightened government repression and a further crackdown on civic space. Independent monitoring will be essential to prevent the recurrence of crimes against humanity and alert the international community of appropriate prevention and response strategies.

For the past eight years Venezuela has faced a humanitarian catastrophe as a result of endemic corruption, economic collapse, political conflict and repression. The absence of accountable state authority along Venezuela's borders and other areas across the country has facilitated violent organized crime, the proliferation of non-state armed actors and systematic abuses against civilians. Many Venezuelans leaving the country remain at high risk of exploitation, violence or trafficking.

The government is failing to uphold its responsibility to protect all Venezuelans.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

Since November 2017 the EU has imposed asset freezes on 55 individuals, including senior government officials. The US government has imposed targeted sanctions against the government, as well as broader sanctions that have exacerbated the humanitarian crisis.

Under the leadership of Canada and a group of Latin American governments, the HRC established the FFM in September 2019 and renewed its mandate for an additional two years in October 2020.

After Venezuela requested the deferral of the ICC investigation into crimes against humanity on 15 April 2022, the Chief Prosecutor announced he would seek approval from the Pre-Trial Chamber to proceed with his investigation. A Memorandum of Understanding, signed with the government of President Maduro in November 2021, remains intact.

NECESSARY ACTION

Venezuelan authorities must end the systematic repression of actual or alleged opponents and civil society. The government should also commit to genuine and comprehensive security sector and judicial reform and ensure impartial investigations of all serious violations and abuses, including at the highest level. The government should grant the FFM unrestricted access to the country and implement its recommendations. During its upcoming September session, the HRC should renew the mandate of the FFM for a period of two years.

Technical cooperation, including through OHCHR, should be based on the FFM's recommendations on necessary system-wide reform, as well as address risk factors and institutional weaknesses that have facilitated the commission of atrocity crimes. States should exert diplomatic pressure to ensure the government commits to these reforms.

Multilateral efforts to revitalize political negotiations between the government and members of the opposition – the Mexico Dialogue – must prioritize closing human rights protection gaps and addressing structural risk factors.

The Chief Prosecutor of the ICC and his investigative team should engage with survivors and civil society organizations to pursue victim-centered accountability processes.

IMMINENT RISK

The situation is reaching a critical threshold and the risk of mass atrocity crimes occurring in the immediate future is very high if effective preventive action is not taken.



More than 75 percent of South Sudan's population needs humanitarian assistance

SOUTH SUDAN

Ongoing localized and inter-communal violence, as well as political infighting, poses an imminent threat to civilians in South Sudan.

BACKGROUND

Growing discontent within the main political parties in South Sudan – the Sudan People's Liberation Movement of President Salva Kiir and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army in Opposition (SPLM/A-IO) of Vice President Riek Machar – have led to increased instability. In several parts of the country, tensions between the two political parties over access to resources and political appointments have culminated in violent clashes and triggered serious human rights violations, including widespread sexual violence, particularly against women and girls.

Subnational and localized violence remains pervasive, with clashes currently taking place in nine out of ten states, according to the HRC-mandated Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan (CHRSS). Between February-June 2022 the Greater Upper Nile, Greater Equatoria and Greater Bahr el-Ghazal regions experienced a rise in violence, including fighting between government and opposition forces, cattle raids and other attacks. Between April-June the Human Rights Division of the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) documented at least 594 civilian deaths, 69 abductions and 121 cases of sexual violence by government forces and the SPLA-IO, as well as other armed groups and community-based militias. Inter-communal violence by community-based militias accounted for more than 60 percent of the civilian deaths. On 6 July at least 80 people were killed and more than 17,500 displaced during inter-communal violence in Kapoeta North County, Eastern Equatoria.

Over 8.9 million people – more than 75 percent of the population – need humanitarian assistance. According to the UN, hundreds of tons of food and other life-saving supplies have been looted, sometimes with the intent to punish specific communities. There has also been an increase in attacks on humanitarian workers and assets, with OCHA reporting 28 incidents involving violence or threats during July alone. South Sudan is one of the most dangerous countries for humanitarian workers, with at least 130 killed since 2013. An estimated 2 million people remain internally displaced and 2.36 million have fled to neighboring countries.

ANALYSIS

Political instability and armed conflict have been pervasive in South Sudan for the majority of its 11 years of independence. Between December 2013 and April 2018 an estimated 400,000 people were killed as the army and SPLA-IO perpetrated war crimes and crimes against humanity. The CHRSS alleges that between 2017-2019 government troops and opposition forces deliberately used the starvation of civilians as a method of warfare. There has been no substantive attempt to hold perpetrators accountable.

Although the formation of the Transitional Government of National Unity (TGoNU) in 2020 was supposed to provide an opportunity to address divisions in the country, senior political and military leaders continue to manipulate long-standing enmities between rival ethnic communities. Bitter disagreements between and within parties of the TGoNU on how to implement the 2018 peace agreement have led to widening divisions that threaten the future security of the country. Delays in reforming the security sector appear to be a deliberate strategy by President Kiir to retain dominance.

The risks of political and ethnic violence are heightened following the decision in July 2022 by parties to the peace agreement to extend the transitional period and postpone elections. Free, fair, credible and inclusive elections cannot be guaranteed due to the lack of implementation of the constitution-making process and its relevant conditions, as well as security arrangements. The CHRSS previously warned that the pursuit of elections would risk fueling further polarization.

The TGoNU is failing to uphold its responsibility to protect.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

The UNSC has subjected eight people to targeted sanctions since 2015 and imposed an arms embargo since 2018. On 15 March 2022 the UNSC extended the mandate of UNMISS, emphasizing that, "South Sudan's government bears the primary responsibility to protect its populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity."

During its 49th session in March 2022, the HRC adopted two resolutions extending the mandate of the CHRSS until March 2023 and requesting that the High Commissioner provide technical assistance to the government on human rights monitoring and transitional justice.

In July the US withdrew from the Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission – established to monitor and oversee the implementation of the 2018 peace agreement – due to a lack of progress.

NECESSARY ACTION

The international community should exert increased diplomatic pressure on all parties to the 2018 peace agreement to ensure its full implementation. The UNSC should impose further targeted sanctions against any individuals who undermine the peace process. The AU, IGAD and neighboring countries should actively enforce the existing arms embargo.

UNMISS should continue to deploy quick reaction forces and temporary operating bases to areas at high risk of violence, as well as enhance its early warning capacities.

The AU and the government should expeditiously establish the Hybrid Court and prosecute individuals responsible for past atrocities, regardless of their affiliation or position.



19,200+ civilians killed or maimed by coalition airstrikes since March 2015

YEMEN

Populations in Yemen remain at imminent risk of war crimes and crimes against humanity amidst a fragile truce.

BACKGROUND

For the past seven years civilians in Yemen have suffered from recurrent war crimes and crimes against humanity. Fighting between Houthi forces, the Southern Transitional Council (STC) and forces loyal to the internationally recognized government – as well as airstrikes by a Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates (UAE)-led international coalition – have resulted in

the death of thousands of civilians since March 2015. More than 19,200 civilians have been killed or maimed as a result of coalition airstrikes alone, including over 2,300 children. The conflict has displaced at least 4 million people and created the world's largest humanitarian crisis, with more than 23.4 million Yemenis in need of humanitarian assistance and 19 million facing food insecurity.

On 2 April parties to the conflict commenced a truce brokered by the UN Special Envoy for Yemen, Hans Grundberg. The truce – the first negotiated country-wide ceasefire since 2016 – includes a cessation of all attacks, the entry of fuel ships in Hodeidah ports and the operation of commercial flights in and out of Sana'a airport. The truce has been renewed twice and will expire on 2 October 2022. Since the start of the ceasefire, civilian casualties have significantly decreased and no coalition airstrikes have been recorded.

In the months preceding the negotiated truce, armed hostilities and indiscriminate bombing had dramatically escalated. Between October 2021 and April the Saudi/UAE-led coalition perpetrated the highest rate of air raids since before the December 2018 Stockholm Agreement. Missiles and airstrikes across numerous governorates targeted and destroyed civilian objects, including water reservoirs, hospitals and telecommunications towers. Over 1,100 civilians were killed or maimed between January and the start of the truce.

From 2018–2021, the HRC-mandated Group of Eminent Experts (GEE) on Yemen documented a pattern of violations and abuses of international law that may amount to war crimes, including indiscriminate airstrikes and shelling, torture, arbitrary detention and sexual and gender-based violence. The GEE alleged that Canada, France, Iran, UK and US may be complicit in these violations due to their provision of military intelligence, arms and logistical support to some parties to the conflict. The UNSC-mandated Panel of Experts on Yemen has also reported that since 2015 arbitrary arrests and detention, enforced disappearances, ill-treatment and torture of detainees have been conducted by the governments of Yemen and Saudi Arabia, as well as the Houthis, STC and forces affiliated with the UAE. The Panel reported in January 2022 that over 2,000 children recruited by the Houthis have died in combat since 2020.

ANALYSIS

While the truce – which has held for almost six months – is providing tangible relief to civilians in Yemen, large-scale atrocity risks remain until a permanent truce and inclusive negotiated peace settlement are reached, and extensive justice and accountability efforts, including reparations to victims, are advanced. Previous ceasefires and attempted negotiations between parties to the conflict have been unsuccessful.

All parties to the conflict have perpetrated indiscriminate attacks and targeted civilian objects, amounting to war crimes and crimes against humanity. The protracted crisis in Yemen has been exacerbated by pervasive impunity that has fueled

lawlessness and resulted in extensive civilian harm. The dire humanitarian situation is a direct result of the armed conflict.

All parties to the conflict in Yemen have been unable or unwilling to uphold their responsibility to protect and require ongoing support from the international community.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

The UNSC imposed financial sanctions and travel bans on former President Ali Abdullah Saleh and Houthi leaders in November 2014. On 14 April 2015 the UNSC established an arms embargo on Houthi leaders and individuals acting on their behalf or under their direction. On 28 February 2022 the UNSC altered the arms embargo to include the Houthis as an entity subject to the embargo measures. In April the Houthis signed an Action Plan with the UN to commit to end and prevent grave violations against children.

On 11 February 2021 the European Parliament passed a landmark resolution urging EU member states to use all available tools to hold accountable perpetrators of violations of international law in Yemen, including through universal jurisdiction.

Following heavy diplomatic and political pressure from Saudi Arabia, on 7 October 2021 the HRC failed to renew the mandate of the GEE, terminating the only international independent mechanism dedicated to monitoring international law violations in Yemen. A surge in civilian casualties and hostilities followed the termination of the GEE.

During August 2022 UN Special Envoy Grundberg submitted an expanded truce proposal to warring parties, including steps toward opening roads in Taizz and other governorates, expanding flights arriving in Sana'a airport and providing regular flow of fuel to Hodeidah.

NECESSARY ACTION

All parties to the conflict should fully adhere to the terms of the UN-brokered country-wide truce, as well as make every effort to implement the terms of an expanded truce proposal and reach a negotiated end to the protracted conflict. UN Special Envoy Grundberg should broaden the negotiations to include all relevant parties to the conflict and other key groups in Yemen, as well as ensure that accountability and justice feature prominently in the peace process.

The government of Yemen should allow access to representatives from OHCHR and ensure that all potential war crimes and crimes against humanity are properly investigated and prosecuted. All parties to the conflict – with assistance from the international community – must ensure the provision of reparations to all victims of international crimes. UN member states should urgently work to establish a new criminal justice-focused mechanism to advance accountability for perpetrators of war crimes and crimes against humanity. The UNSC should refer the situation in Yemen to the ICC.

SERIOUS CONCERN

There is a significant risk of occurrence, or recurrence, of mass atrocity crimes within the foreseeable future if effective action is not taken.



Over 5,900 people have been killed since October 2017

MOZAMBIQUE

Ongoing attacks by armed extremists from "Al-Shabaab" leave populations in Mozambique at risk of further atrocity crimes.

BACKGROUND

Since October 2017 an armed extremist group, known locally as "Al-Shabaab," has engaged in a violent insurgency in Cabo Delgado, a northern province of Mozambique. Al-Shabaab, which is loosely affiliated with ISIL, has perpetrated indiscriminate attacks against civilians, including beheadings, sexual and gender-based violence, sexual slavery, abductions, recruitment of child soldiers and destruction of civilian infrastructure. More than 5,900 people have been killed and at least 946,000 have been displaced since October 2017. Both Al-Shabaab and government security forces have perpetrated extrajudicial executions and other violations of IHL that may amount to war crimes. Significant fighting between Al-Shabaab and security forces has taken place near Mocimboa da Praia, Palma and other port towns where several major offshore liquefied natural gas projects are under development.

In July 2021 regional forces, including troops from Rwanda and members of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), began deploying to Cabo Delgado to assist the Mozambican government in confronting the group. Although the forces have aided the government in regaining control of many cities, insurgent activity has continued, particularly in southern parts of Cabo Delgado.

Following a relative lull in insurgent activity, the number of violent events and reported fatalities have increased since April 2022. In early June insurgents launched an offensive against the Ancuabe, Chiure and Mecufi districts, with raids and beheadings

triggering displacement. Recurrent attacks in Ancuabe and Chiure districts have displaced over 83,000 people, the majority of whom are women and children.

Insecurity in northern Mozambique continues to prevent humanitarian aid from reaching vulnerable populations. At least 1.5 million people in northern Mozambique need life-saving humanitarian assistance and protection. Despite ongoing violence, the government is encouraging IDPs to return.

ANALYSIS

Al-Shabaab has sporadically intensified their attacks since 2020, and their continued willingness to indiscriminately attack civilians increases the risk of further atrocities. Al-Shabaab has exploited local grievances and popular discontent over corruption and poverty in Mozambique to recruit fighters.

The discovery of liquefied natural gas off the coast of Mozambique brought hope for a boost to the country's economy. While several companies announced they would halt work on the project, citing insecurity, TotalEnergies has indicated it is planning to resume operations in 2023.

Mozambique has a history of atrocities stemming from its 1977-1992 civil war, during which approximately 1 million people died. War crimes and crimes against humanity were perpetrated by the armed rebel group, RENAMO. Government armed forces also perpetrated war crimes.

The government of Mozambique is struggling to uphold its responsibility to protect and requires continued assistance.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

In June 2021 SADC approved the deployment of a standby force to assist Mozambique for an initial period of three months. SADC has subsequently extended the mission and in April 2022 revised the operation, shifting away from a force with rapid deployment capabilities to a multidimensional operation with greater focus on peacebuilding and strengthening governance. In August SADC extended the mission with no deadline.

In July 2021, following a request by the Mozambican government, Rwanda deployed 1,000 troops and police to Cabo Delgado. According to the government of Rwanda, the deployment is "grounded in Rwanda's commitment to the Responsibility to Protect doctrine and the 2015 Kigali Principles on the Protection of Civilians."

NECESSARY ACTION

Mozambique's security forces and their regional partners should ensure the protection of civilians and IDPs in Cabo Delgado, including through increasing patrols in areas vulnerable to

attack. All government and regional forces must ensure military operations against Al-Shabaab are carried out with strict adherence to international law and utilize tactics that mitigate civilian harm. Neighboring states must respect international refugee law and provide protection to populations fleeing atrocities.

It is essential to provide psycho-social support to civilians who were abducted or subjected to sexual violence and to engage in demobilization, disengagement and reintegration efforts for children recruited into conflict.

Authorities should prosecute high-level Al-Shabaab members. The government should more effectively address the local and political roots of the insurgency.



More than 2,600 civilians killed
by armed bandits in 2021

NIGERIA

Increased attacks by armed bandit groups, as well as continued attacks by Boko Haram and the Islamic State in West Africa, leave civilians at risk of mass atrocity crimes.

BACKGROUND

Since 2011 inter-communal violence, rooted in competition over scarce resources, has escalated in central and north-west Nigeria. Alongside persistent violence between herding and farming communities, armed banditry has expanded in north-west Nigeria, displacing hundreds of thousands of people. According to the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project, armed bandit groups killed more than 2,600 civilians in 2021. Between January and March 2022 at least 360 people were killed by bandits in Kaduna State alone, while on 10 April more than 100 people were killed in attacks on several communities in the Kanam Local Government Area of Plateau State.

Violence perpetrated by armed extremist groups, namely Boko Haram and the so-called Islamic State in West Africa (ISWA) against civilian and military targets has also resulted in mass

atrocities in northern Nigeria. Between 24 May and 7 June 2022 at least 60 civilians were killed by Boko Haram in Dikwa local government area, Borno State. According to Nigerian authorities, ISWA killed at least 40 people, including children, during an attack on a church on 5 June in Owo, Ondo State. More than 35,000 people have been killed in northern Nigeria since 2009 when Boko Haram launched its insurgency aimed at overthrowing Nigeria's secular government and establishing an Islamic state. There are at least 1.8 million IDPs in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states while health services and education have been severely disrupted. These groups have also perpetrated attacks in neighboring countries, killing and displacing civilians in Cameroon, Chad and Niger.

Responding to the multiple security crises, in September 2021 the Nigerian government launched renewed campaigns in the north-west to curb armed banditry, including deploying large numbers of troops, cutting off communication networks and imposing restrictions on movement. Increased military operations against extremist hideouts have reportedly killed hundreds of fighters. In January 2022, under the Terrorism Prevention Act, the government designated bandit groups as "terrorists."

According to OCHA, the security situation has resulted in a humanitarian emergency, with more than 8.4 million people – approximately 80 percent of whom are women and children – requiring urgent assistance.

ANALYSIS

Nigeria's armed forces have been deployed in two-thirds of the states in the country and are overstretched as Boko Haram, ISWA and bandit groups expand their areas of operation. Despite notable progress by the regional Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) against Boko Haram, civilians remain at risk of terrorist attacks and identity-based violence. During counterterrorism operations security forces have reportedly committed human rights violations and used excessive force, including extrajudicial killings, against suspected Boko Haram and ISWA members.

Recurring violence between herding and farming communities has become increasingly deadly as a result of the proliferation of armed groups and gangs who engage in organized cattle-rustling, kidnapping, plunder, murder and rape. Growing desertification has exacerbated the situation as the loss of grazing land in the north has driven many ethnic Fulani herdsman, who are mainly Muslim, southward into areas farmed by settled communities that are predominantly Christian. Many of Nigeria's bandit groups have formed in response to growing inter-communal conflict over land and resources. While these groups are driven largely by criminal motives, many bandits are ethnic Fulani and prey on settled farming communities, increasing ethnic tensions.

The government of Nigeria is struggling to uphold its responsibility to protect and needs ongoing support from the international community.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

In 2015 the AU authorized the MNJTF to combat armed extremism.

On 11 December 2020 the Chief Prosecutor of the ICC announced the completion of a preliminary examination into the situation in Nigeria, concluding that Boko Haram and Nigerian security forces committed war crimes and crimes against humanity. During a visit to Nigeria in April 2022 the Chief Prosecutor reminded the Nigerian authorities of their legal obligations under the Rome Statute to conduct effective, genuine and meaningful national investigations and prosecutions for atrocity crimes.

On 10 January 2022 UN Secretary-General António Guterres issued a statement condemning bandit attacks in Zamfara State and urged the Nigerian authorities to bring those responsible to justice.

NECESSARY ACTION

While the lack of adequate military protection for vulnerable populations needs to be urgently addressed, social initiatives and political reforms remain crucial to confronting the root causes of conflict, including poor governance, corruption, poverty, youth unemployment and environmental degradation.

Local peace commissions established to mediate inter-communal tensions and build early warning systems, such as those in Adamawa, Kaduna and Plateau states, need to be duplicated in other high-risk regions.

Utilizing ECOWAS' Early Warning System, the government should increase police and military deployments to vulnerable areas, while ensuring strict adherence to IHL and IHRL during operations. The government also needs to urgently reform the security sector, including by incorporating IHL and IHRL into all military and police training, and ensure accountability for human rights violations.



322+ people killed in inter-communal violence and armed attacks in 2022

SUDAN

Populations in Sudan are at risk of atrocity crimes due to ongoing political instability and use of lethal force against civilians by security forces and affiliated militias. Inter-communal and localized violence also pose a threat to populations.

BACKGROUND

On 25 October 2021 the military in Sudan, under the leadership of General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan – head of the transitional joint civilian-military Sovereign Council – seized power by dissolving the governing body, declaring a state of emergency and arresting civilian leaders, including then Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok, who was later released. Since then, hundreds of thousands of protesters have demonstrated across the country, demanding the reinstatement of a genuine civilian-led government.

While attempting to curb demonstrations, security forces have been accused of consistently using excessive and deadly violence against protesters, including tear gas and lethal weapons, such as AK-47 assault rifles and machine guns. Security forces have also perpetrated sexual and gender-based violence. More than 114 people have been killed and hundreds injured by security forces. Hundreds of protesters have also been unlawfully detained and dozens forcibly disappeared.

The Sovereign Council had come to power in August 2019 after country-wide protests brought an end to then President Omar al-Bashir's 30-year rule that April.

Since October 2021 renewed inter-communal and localized violence in the Darfur and Kordofan regions has continued unabated, resulting in civilian casualties, destruction of property and human rights violations. According to OCHA, at least 322 people were killed in inter-communal conflicts and armed attacks and more than 163,000 displaced between January–July 2022. Of the 199 reported incidents, 74 occurred in West Darfur, 31 in South Kordofan and 30 in North Darfur. Between 6–11 June at least 125 people were killed and 50,000 displaced as a result of fighting between the Arab Rizegat and non-Arab Gimir

communities in different localities in West Darfur. In Blue Nile State at least 105 people were killed after fighting broke out on 11 July between the Berti and Hausa communities.

ANALYSIS

Security forces in Sudan have a history of violent crackdowns on protests and dissent. During mass demonstrations against military rule between December 2018 and August 2019, security forces killed more than 200 people and arrested thousands. More than ten months after the coup, demonstrators and other populations continue to face grave human rights violations that may amount to atrocities.

Political instability and the re-deployment of security forces to Khartoum and other cities has created a security vacuum in Darfur and other peripheral regions leaving communities vulnerable to attack. While the Sovereign Council and the leaders of the Sudan Revolutionary Front – a coalition of armed groups from Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile – signed a historic peace agreement (Juba Agreement) in October 2020, the Sudanese military's limited progress on implementing relevant provisions has stalled peacebuilding efforts. Inter-communal tensions are also being exploited by political actors.

During his 30-year dictatorship, former President Bashir and other government officials were responsible for crimes against humanity, war crimes and acts of genocide while fighting armed groups in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile. Bashir has not been held accountable for past atrocity crimes. Mohamed Hamdan "Hemedti" Dagolo, a member of the Sovereign Council involved in the 25 October coup, is also implicated in atrocities committed as commander of the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces.

The Sudanese military must uphold its responsibility to protect all populations across the country.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

The UNSC has imposed an arms embargo on Darfur since 2004 and sanctions on three individuals since 2006. Following a 2005 UNSC referral, the ICC has issued arrest warrants for three Sudanese officials, including Bashir and two anti-government militia leaders, for atrocities perpetrated in Darfur. On 5 April 2022 the ICC opened the trial of the former Janjaweed leader,

Muhammad Ali Abd-Al-Rahman (Ali Kushayb) – the Court's first trial concerning potential war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Darfur.

On 3 June 2021 the UNSC extended the mandate of the UN Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS), tasked to assist the Sudanese authorities during the transition to democracy, until June 2022. On 8 January 2022 UNITAMS launched intra-Sudanese consultations to end the political impasse.

Following the coup, the AU suspended Sudan. Several states and multilateral organizations, including the US, World Bank and International Monetary Fund, paused foreign aid and halted disbursements. On 5 November the HRC held a special session and adopted a resolution that designated an Expert on Human Rights to monitor and report on the developing situation in Sudan since the coup. Adama Dieng, former UN Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, was appointed to the role and visited the country in February and June 2022.

The Trilateral Mechanism – a group consisting of UNITAMS, the AU and IGAD – launched political talks on 8 June. General Burhan announced the military's withdrawal from the political talks on 4 July.

NECESSARY ACTION

Security forces should protect the fundamental right to peaceful assembly and refrain from using excessive and deadly force against protesters. All those unlawfully detained or placed under house arrest should be released immediately.

The Sudanese authorities need to urgently implement the National Plan for the Protection of Civilians and the Juba Peace Agreement in order to provide safety and security for civilians in the Darfur, Blue Nile and Kordofan regions.

The international community should support and invest in a credible political transition that respects the people's desire for democracy.

The UNSC must continue to closely monitor the precarious security situation in Sudan and call upon the Sudanese authorities to restore a credible civilian-led government.

R2P MONITOR

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