

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

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|---------------------------------|---|
| Bilagsnr.: | 918 |
| Land: | Sudan |
| Kilde: | Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect |
| Titel: | Atrocity Alert No. 418 |
| Udgivet: | 20. november 2024 |
| Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet: | 1. april 2025 |

Atrocity Alert No. 418: Sudan, Haiti and Ukraine

Atrocity Alert is a weekly publication by the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect highlighting situations where populations are at risk of, or are enduring, mass atrocity crimes.

UN SECURITY COUNCIL FAILS TO ADOPT CIVILIAN PROTECTION MEASURES IN SUDAN

Emerging reports indicate that the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) are close to taking full control of El Fasher, North Darfur's capital city, following weeks of intense clashes with the [Sudanese](#) Armed Forces (SAF) to secure strategic areas. In September the RSF [breached](#) the SAF's outer defenses in central El Fasher. Recent reports from the Yale School of Public Health's Humanitarian Research Lab (HRL) claim that fighting is now advancing towards the city center, including around the SAF's 6th Division Command, the airfield and the B-26 road to Zamzam camp. Over the weekend residents reported heavy artillery exchanges and direct clashes between the RSF and SAF in southeastern El Fasher. In response to RSF advances, the SAF intensified airstrikes targeting positions near the city center in efforts to regain control.

Of particular concern are the hundreds of thousands of people in the Zamzam camp, one of the largest displacement camps in North Darfur. If El Fasher falls, Zamzam is likely to be the next target due to its strategic location, the RSF's history of targeting displacement sites and the predominance of Zaghawa populations within the camp, which the RSF have previously targeted in its ethnic cleansing campaigns. Based on satellite imagery, the HRL reached a similar assessment of the risks to Zamzam "with high confidence."

Despite these imminent risks and unabated fighting in Sudan, on 18 November the UN Security Council (UNSC) failed to pass a resolution aimed at advancing civilian protection measures when Russia exercised its veto. The resolution sought to mandate the UN Secretary-General to propose a compliance mechanism to facilitate implementation of the Jeddah Declaration, an agreement signed by the SAF and RSF which outlines commitments regarding the protection of civilians and the facilitation of humanitarian assistance. Given the urgent situation, the United Kingdom and Sierra Leone, as the penholders, were determined to finalize deliberations on the draft resolution expeditiously, even though negotiations were contentious. Rt. Hon. David Lammy MP, the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs of the United Kingdom, said, "Russia's veto sends a message to the warring parties that they can act with impunity. That they can ignore their commitments and responsibilities to protect their own people."

The UNSC must continue its efforts to address the crisis in Sudan by calling for a comprehensive, nationwide ceasefire and demanding that all parties adhere to international human rights and humanitarian law and ensure the unrestricted flow of humanitarian aid. The UNSC should also consider a stronger resolution with effective measures aimed at the protection of civilians and the prevention of any further escalation in civilian harm. Both the RSF and SAF must immediately

cease hostilities and allow aid delivery across the country. The RSF must urgently lift its siege of El Fasher.

ARMED GANGS CONTINUE TO TERRORIZE COMMUNITIES ACROSS PORT-AU-PRINCE, HAITI

Since 11 November gang violence has flared across [Haiti's](#) capital, Port-au-Prince, as a coalition of gangs, known as Viv Ansanm, has stepped up their attacks and taken control of additional territory. The International Organization for Migration warned that the capital faces “near-total paralysis.” On 14 November the Solino neighborhood fell under gang control following several days of violent firefight, while countless families fled Nazon, fearing a possible imminent attack. This week Viv Ansanm launched a series of attacks in Pétienville, Canapé Vert and other areas. More than 20,000 people were displaced in four days alone.

Gangs are exploiting ongoing political turmoil and challenging the limited response capacity of the Haitian National Police and [UN Security Council-authorized](#) Multinational Security Support Mission (MSS) to expand their territorial control. According to the UN, gangs now control more than 85 percent of the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area, with 1.6 million women and children living in gang-held territory. The MSS has struggled with a funding shortfall and remains severely understaffed to quell gang violence, prompting calls for a robust UN peacekeeping operation.

The UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Haiti and Head of the UN Integrated Office in Haiti, María Isabel Salvador, stressed, “Women, men, and especially children, bear the brunt of gang atrocities, which include murders, kidnappings, and sexual violence of unprecedented brutality...” The UN Human Rights Office recently reported nearly 4,000 gang-related deaths and a ten-fold increase in sexual violence against children in 2024. Gangs are systematically using sexual violence as a weapon of terror and subjugation, with women and children disproportionately affected.

Ongoing insecurity has significantly disrupted humanitarian activities, with reportedly only 20 percent of the capital accessible to aid workers. Healthcare facilities and medical personnel have also been increasingly targeted. On 20 November Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) announced the suspension of their activities in Port-au-Prince following a series of threats and violence by police officers, including death and rape, in the week after members of a self-defense group and police officers attacked an MSF ambulance, resulting in the execution of at least two patients and physical harm to their staff. The UN has [previously documented](#) the possible disproportionate use of lethal force and lack of precautionary measures to protect populations during police operations.

All armed actors must provide immediate, safe and unimpeded humanitarian access and respect international human rights obligations. The international community must increase flexible funding for aid operations, as well as for development assistance to support recovery and resilience-building. Stakeholders need to take urgent, concerted action to ensure the MSS has the sufficient means to quell the new wave of escalating gang violence.

1,000 DAYS OF WAR ACROSS UKRAINE

This week marked 1,000 days since Russia launched its full-scale invasion of [Ukraine](#) on 24 February 2022 and unleashed wanton death and destruction across the country. Russian forces have perpetrated likely war crimes against the civilian population, including indiscriminate attacks, [systematic use of torture](#) and sexual and gender-based violence. According to the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, at least 12,162 civilians, including 659 children, have been killed. Russian forces have launched incessant air and drone strikes that have targeted civilians and civilian infrastructure, with at least 92 percent of civilian casualties caused by the use of

indiscriminate explosive weapons. According to the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), on average 16 children are killed and injured every week in the conflict.

UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell said, "The toll on children is staggering and unacceptable... Children have been killed in their beds, in hospitals and playgrounds, leaving families devastated by the loss of young lives or life-altering injuries." At least 1,496 educational institutions and 662 health facilities have been damaged or destroyed in the last 1,000 days. Targeted and indiscriminate attacks on civilians and civilian objects, such as residential buildings, hospitals and schools, are prohibited under International Humanitarian Law and may amount to war crimes.

While the conflict has moved into its [third year](#), attacks have [significantly escalated](#) in 2024. During a UN Security Council meeting on 18 November, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo warned that there has been a significant increase in civilian casualties during the last several months due to the escalation of strikes with wide-area effects. October and November saw some of the most intense, large-scale missile and drone attacks since the start of the war. In one of the largest attacks, perpetrated from 16 to 17 November, energy infrastructure across all of Ukraine's regions was targeted, resulting in severe damage and casualties. Given the magnitude of Russia's attack on Ukraine's energy infrastructure, the UN Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine has found that these attacks may amount to crimes against humanity.

Attacks on energy and civilian infrastructure continue to exacerbate the humanitarian situation. Since August 2024 at least 170,000 people have been forced to flee fighting, while 3.6 million remain internally displaced and over 6.75 million have fled to other countries. Along the conflict frontline, at least three million people are in need of heat as temperatures drop, in addition to other basic necessities and humanitarian assistance.

Meanwhile, geopolitical escalations, like the deployment of [North Korean soldiers](#) to aid Russian forces in their war efforts, as well as posturing surrounding long-range strikes, continue to increase the risks for civilians in Ukraine and across the border in [Russia](#).

The international community must continue to support Ukraine's air defense systems, which are key to protecting civilians and civilian infrastructure from bombardments. Increased humanitarian support is crucial for the millions in need of essential services during the cold winter months.