

R2P MONITOR

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A bimonthly bulletin by
the Global Centre for the
Responsibility to Protect

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 the Responsibility to Protect 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 (UN), key regional actors and the International Criminal Court (ICC).
- » Suggests *necessary action* to prevent or halt the commission of mass atrocity crimes.

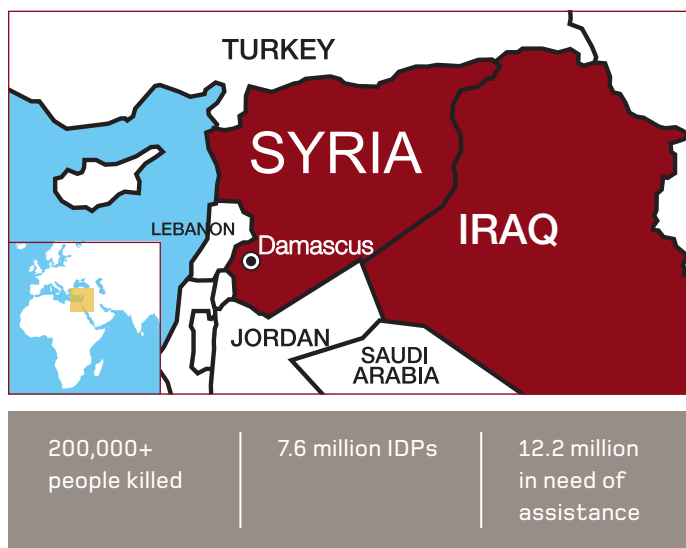
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CURRENT CRISIS

Mass atrocity crimes are occurring and urgent action is needed.



SYRIA

The ongoing civil war in Syria leaves populations facing mass atrocity crimes committed by state security forces and affiliated militias. Some armed opposition groups, including the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, are also committing war crimes and crimes against humanity.

BACKGROUND

After almost four years of conflict in Syria over 200,000 people have been killed. According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), as of 6 January there are over 3.3 million Syrian refugees in neighboring countries and over 7.6 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) – the largest number of people displaced by any conflict in the world. The crisis has left 12.2 million Syrians in urgent need of humanitarian assistance, 4.7 million of whom remain in inaccessible areas, while 241,000 people are being besieged, mostly by government forces. The conflict poses a threat to peace and stability throughout the entire Middle East.

The government continues its bombardment of opposition-held residential areas, despite UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 2139 of 22 February, which demanded a halt to the use of indiscriminate weapons in populated areas. Some allied militias have committed large-scale massacres and perpetrated war crimes and gross violations of international humanitarian law (IHL) as a matter of state policy. The UN Human Rights Council-mandated Commission of Inquiry (CoI) has reported that pro-government forces have conducted "widespread attacks on the civilian population, committing murder, torture, rape and enforced disappearances as crimes against humanity."

The armed opposition in Syria has become increasingly fractured, with groups competing for support and resources, as well as widespread fighting between extremists and more

moderate rebel militias. Several armed opposition groups have committed mass atrocity crimes, violated IHL and targeted religious minorities for attack.

The "Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant" (ISIL), an extremist armed group operating on both sides of the Syria-Iraq border, poses an ongoing threat to civilians as its forces have carried out mass executions and sexual enslavement in areas under their control. The CoI has reported that ISIL has committed crimes against humanity. On 28 December the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) reported that ISIL killed 1,878 people in Syria during the previous six months, most of whom were civilians.

After six weeks of United States airstrikes on ISIL positions in Iraq, on 23 September Bahrain, Jordan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and United States launched airstrikes against ISIL in Syria. The SOHR reported on 23 December that at least 1,170 people, most of whom were ISIL fighters, had been killed by the airstrikes, as well as 52 civilians.

ISIL initiated a siege of the Kurdish town of Kobane, near the Turkish border, on 6 October. The UN Secretary-General and the new UN Special Envoy to Syria, Staffan de Mistura, called for international action to protect trapped Kurdish civilians. On 20 October Turkey opened its borders for Iraqi Kurdish fighters to cross into Syria and provide support to Kurdish forces in Kobane. Most of Kobane's civilians have fled into Turkey, but hundreds remain amid ongoing fighting. As of 6 January 2015 Kurdish fighters have reportedly reclaimed control of eighty percent of the town.

The UN has reported that all parties to the Syrian conflict have laid sieges and impeded humanitarian access to vulnerable civilians. On 30 October the Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Kyung-wha Kang, reported that despite improved access following UNSC Resolution 2165 of 14 July, the humanitarian situation continues to worsen and the level of violence, death and destruction remains unrelenting.

Lebanon, which hosts over 1.1 million Syrian refugees, has seen sporadic clashes between supporters and opponents of the Syrian government. Hezbollah has directly engaged in fighting against Syrian rebels on both sides of the Syria-Lebanon border and has vowed to remain militarily active inside Syria. On 5 January the government imposed new visa restrictions for Syrians attempting to cross into Lebanon.

International actors continue to vie for influence in shaping the outcome of the conflict. Saudi Arabia and Qatar are providing arms to some rebel groups. Meanwhile Russia and Iran continue to provide the Syrian government with crucial economic, military and political support.

International diplomatic negotiations have stalled. The "Geneva II" peace conference, aimed at ending the violence in Syria, finished on 15 February 2014 with no tangible political progress.

ANALYSIS

With all sides in Syria committed to an outright military victory, the conflict imperils the lives of countless civilians who continue to be directly threatened by the ongoing civil war.

The government continues to utilize its military resources to retain power at all costs and perpetrate ongoing crimes against humanity and war crimes. With superior capabilities and external assistance, the Syrian government was able to make significant military gains in several provinces during 2014.

The fracturing and radicalization of the opposition has strengthened the position of the government and compounded the difficulty of achieving a negotiated political settlement. ISIL and several other armed extremist groups pose a direct threat to civilians, especially those from minority religious communities.

External political influence upon the Syrian government via the UN and regional actors remains weak. Sanctions have had limited success as Syria's few remaining allies continue to provide crucial economic insulation. Long-standing divisions within the UNSC over Syria have allowed the situation to deteriorate to the point where few options for a peaceful political solution exist. Nevertheless, it remains imperative that diplomatic efforts be reinvigorated.

The government of Syria has not only manifestly failed to uphold its Responsibility to Protect, it bears primary responsibility for the ongoing commission of mass atrocity crimes.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

Following the outbreak of violence during March 2011, the international community responded by censuring the regime for its widespread violations of human rights. [For responses prior to August 2014, [see GCR2P's Timeline of International Response to the Situation in Syria.](#)]

Between October 2011 and July 2012 Russia and China vetoed three UNSC resolutions aimed at holding the Syrian government accountable for mass atrocity crimes. However, since September 2013 the UNSC has also passed Resolution 2118, regarding the destruction of chemical weapons, and Resolutions 2139 and 2165, demanding increased humanitarian access. Resolutions 2139 and 2165 also reaffirmed the need for the government to uphold its primary responsibility to protect the Syrian population. On 22 May 2014 Russia and China vetoed a fourth resolution that would have referred the situation in Syria to the ICC for investigation.

On 15 August the UNSC adopted Resolution 2170 on threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts. The resolution condemned "gross, systematic and widespread abuses" of human rights by ISIL and al-Qaeda affiliated groups operating in Syria and Iraq, placing six individuals on its sanctions list.

The UN Human Rights Council has adopted 13 resolutions condemning atrocities in Syria. The most recent, passed on 23 September, condemned violations of IHL and international human rights law and demanded that the government uphold its responsibility to protect the population.

On 18 December the UN General Assembly passed a resolution condemning widespread and systematic violations of human rights and IHL by the Syrian authorities and various armed groups, including ISIL. The resolution urged all parties to take appropriate steps to protect civilians, including members of minority ethnic and religious communities.

NECESSARY ACTION

Syrian government forces and armed opposition groups must halt the commission of mass atrocity crimes and adhere to IHL. All sides must facilitate immediate and unimpeded humanitarian access to civilian populations trapped or displaced by fighting, in keeping with UNSC Resolutions 2139 and 2165.

The UNSC needs to take proximate steps to end atrocities in Syria, including imposing an arms embargo and referring the situation to the ICC. Those deemed responsible for mass atrocity crimes in Syria should be thoroughly investigated and the perpetrators, regardless of affiliation, brought to justice.

Russia, Iran and Hezbollah must cease arming and enabling the crimes of the Syrian government. Countries opposed to the rule of President Bashar Al-Assad should deny support to armed groups who commit war crimes or target Alawites and other minorities for reprisals.

The international community must intensify efforts towards finding a political solution to the conflict and increasing humanitarian assistance to populations trapped or displaced by the civil war. States participating in airstrikes against ISIL must ensure all necessary precautions are taken to avoid civilian casualties and uphold IHL.

MORE INFORMATION

- » [Report of the Col A/HRC/27/60](#), 13 August 2014
- » [UNSC Resolution S/Res/2170](#), 15 August 2014
- » [UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/69/189, Situation of human rights in Syria](#), 18 December 2014
- » [GCR2P Populations at Risk: Syria](#)



12,280 civilians killed during 2014 [excluding Anbar Province]

2 million people displaced during 2014

IRAQ

The extremist armed group the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant is committing mass atrocities against ethnic and religious minorities in Iraq. As the Iraqi Security Forces, Shia militias and Kurdish fighters confront ISIL, civilians remain at risk of further mass atrocity crimes.

BACKGROUND

The security situation in Iraq remains dire as a result of ongoing attacks by ISIL, which operates on both sides of the Iraq-Syria border and has declared a caliphate spanning both countries. ISIL and several associated armed groups have engaged in widespread fighting with the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), targeted minorities and caused the mass displacement of vulnerable civilian populations. ISIL's violations may amount to crimes against humanity and war crimes and include targeted killings, forced conversions, slavery and sexual abuse.

The UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) reported that 2014 was the deadliest year in Iraq since 2008, recording a minimum of 12,280 civilians killed, excluding Anbar province. UNHCR reported that 2 million Iraqis were displaced during 2014, including approximately 946,000 who have sought sanctuary in the autonomous Kurdish region.

ISIL seized the northern town of Sinjar on 3 August, threatening death to members of the minority Yazidi community who refused conversion to Islam. ISIL reportedly killed at least 500 Yazidis and abducted 1,500 women and girls. A group of UN experts called upon the international community to employ all possible means to "avoid a mass atrocity and potential genocide within days or hours." Following a request from the Iraqi government, on 8 August the United States began airstrikes against ISIL positions around Sinjar "to prevent a potential act of genocide," according to President Barack Obama. Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Morocco, Netherlands and United Kingdom have all since joined operations against ISIL in Iraq.

On 19 December Kurdish forces, backed by allied airstrikes, reportedly broke ISIL's siege of the Sinjar region. ISIL continues to systematically attack ethnic and religious minorities, including Christians, Shabak and Turkomen, throughout western and northern Iraq.

Responding to sectarian terrorist attacks and the rise of ISIL, Shia militias have carried out retaliatory attacks against Sunni civilians. On 14 October Amnesty International reported that Shia militias, often armed and backed by the Iraqi government, have been "abducting and killing Sunni civilian men in Baghdad."

The ISF has also been accused of extrajudicial killings, possibly amounting to war crimes, as well as unlawful use of force against peaceful protesters, illegal detention and systematic use of torture. The ISF has dropped improvised barrel bombs on residential neighborhoods of Fallujah, Anbar province, during its attempt to retake parts of the city seized by ISIL.

ANALYSIS

The rising threat posed by ISIL and other armed groups imperils not only the stability of the government, but the lives of countless civilians, particularly ethnic and religious minorities, who face an ongoing risk of further mass atrocities.

Despite a November 2010 power-sharing agreement between political parties representing Shias, Sunnis and Kurds, many Sunnis felt marginalized under former president Nouri al-Maliki. The government's response to a Sunni protest movement that started in December 2012 further aggravated these divisions. ISIL has been able to exploit widespread Sunni disaffection to build alliances with Sunni tribes and seize large swathes of territory and resources. Cultural identities and transnational loyalties continue to be manipulated by various political forces in Iraq and contribute to the government's inability to resolve the security crisis.

There are grave fears for the fate of civilians who continue to be trapped by fighting between ISIL and the ISF. Human rights violations are routinely perpetrated by the ISF, who often commit abuses in the name of counter-terrorism. Some Shia militias, mobilized by the government to fight ISIL, pose a direct threat to Sunni civilians. Meanwhile ISIL has consistently failed to protect civilians in areas under its control and is committed to the eradication of religious communities that do not conform to its strict interpretation of Islam.

The Iraqi government is unable to uphold its Responsibility to Protect and needs ongoing international assistance.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

On 5 and 7 August the UNSC condemned ISIL attacks on Sinjar and Tal Afar. On 15 August the UNSC adopted Resolution 2170, condemning "gross, systematic and widespread abuses" by ISIL and al-Qaeda affiliated groups operating in Iraq and Syria.

On 15 August the European Union (EU) voted to allow member states to provide military assistance to Kurdish fighters

battling ISIL. Nine EU members, as well as Albania and Canada, have committed to providing military assistance. The United States announced on 19 December that it would deploy an additional 1,300 troops to Iraq to join the 1,500 authorized in November.

On 1 September the UN Human Rights Council supported a request by the Iraqi government to dispatch a fact-finding mission to investigate abuses committed by ISIL.

In a 17 October Press Statement the UNSC condemned ISIL's "systematic persecution of minorities" and called upon the international community to expand support to the Iraqi government in its fight against ISIL.

NECESSARY ACTION

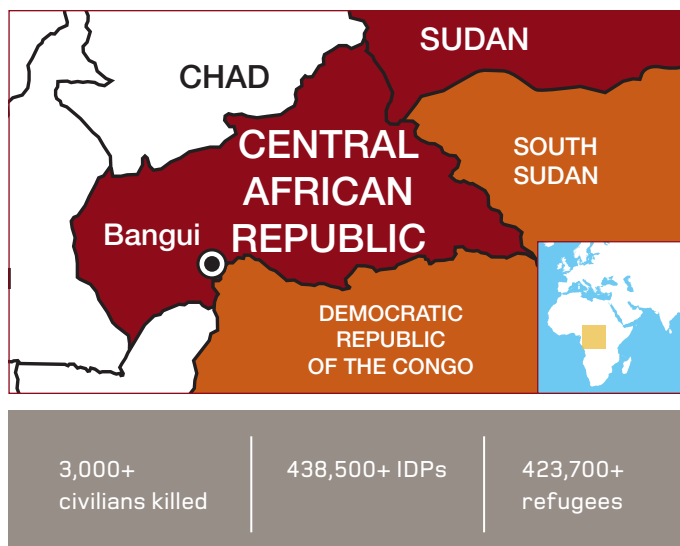
The international community should continue to provide military support to the Iraqi government to combat the threat ISIL poses to vulnerable populations, especially religious and ethnic minorities. While confronting ISIL and other armed groups, the government must protect civilians and address the underlying sources of conflict between Sunnis, Shias and Kurds in Iraq. Displaced populations require urgent humanitarian assistance.

The government must actively prevent reprisals against Sunni communities by the ISF and Shia militias. The government and its international supporters, especially the United States, must ensure that the ISF complies with its obligations under international human rights law. The Kurdistan Regional Government is also in need of international support to defend vulnerable populations from ongoing ISIL attacks.

Sunni, Shia and Kurdish political leaders must work to address issues of regional autonomy and perceptions of sectarian discrimination. Politicians should refrain from incendiary speech and work towards national reconciliation, including equal treatment and representation for all communities.

MORE INFORMATION

- » [UNAMI Website](#)
- » [UNSC Press Statement SC/11605](#), 17 October 2014
- » [GCR2P Populations at Risk: Iraq](#)



CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Mass atrocity crimes are being committed in the Central African Republic by "anti-balaka" militias, ex-Séléka rebels, other armed groups and mobs of civilians.

BACKGROUND

Violence against civilians is pervasive throughout the Central African Republic (CAR) despite the deployment of French forces, a UN peacekeeping operation (MINUSCA) and an EU military force (EUFOR-RCA).

The Muslim population is being systematically targeted by the predominantly Christian and animist "anti-balaka" militias. Formed largely in response to abuses by the Séléka rebel alliance, the primarily Muslim armed group who overthrew former President François Bozizé on 24 March 2013, anti-balaka militias have conducted widespread and systematic attacks against Muslims and are responsible for the majority of civilian deaths in CAR.

The UN estimates that 80 percent of the Muslim population in Bangui and western CAR has been forced to flee or has been killed since September 2013. A 19 December 2014 report of the UN Commission of Inquiry into the situation in CAR states that crimes committed by the anti-balaka constitute a "policy of ethnic cleansing" against the Muslim population.

According to the UN there are at least 16,440 Muslim civilians in eight besieged communities that are still at high risk of attack by the anti-balaka, including approximately 9,000 in the town of Boda and 4,300 in the PK-5 area of Bangui. These enclaves have been systematically encircled, subjected to attack and cut off from food and medical supplies. UNHCR has expressed particular concern for the plight of 474 Muslim Peuhl civilians that have been trapped in Yaloke for several months.

While the security situation in Bangui remains volatile, the 1 December report of the UN Secretary-General notes that the interior is marked by continued, widespread insecurity and the

perpetration of gross human rights violations against civilians. Clashes between anti-balaka militias and ex-Séléka factions have intensified despite the signing of a ceasefire on 23 July.

At least 28 people were killed in fighting between anti-balaka and ex-Séléka rebels in Mbrès on 16 December, just days after reconciliation events supervised by MINUSCA. On 19 and 20 December various clashes near Bambari between anti-balaka and ex-Séléka factions, fighting alongside armed Peuhls, left at least 20 people dead. Fighting in Nola between 20 and 25 December resulted in the death of at least 18 people. Between 31 December and 4 January at least six people were killed in attacks by armed Peuhl and ex-Séléka factions near Batangafo.

According to the UN Panel of Experts on CAR, at least 3,000 civilians have been killed since December 2013. There are currently more than 438,500 IDPs, including at least 51,000 in Bangui, and over 423,700 refugees in neighboring countries. At least 2.7 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance.

The transitional government, led by interim President Catherine Samba-Panza, is struggling to respond to the ongoing crisis. The UN Secretary-General has warned that the permanent "de-facto partition" of the country along ethno-religious lines remains a possibility.

ANALYSIS

CAR has suffered decades of poor governance, recurring instability and humanitarian crisis. Since March 2013 the state has effectively collapsed. National security forces cannot prevent various armed groups and civilian mobs from perpetrating attacks and, in some cases, have engaged in violence themselves. Religion and ethnic identities continue to be manipulated, with communities mobilized against one another.

French, EUFOR-RCA and MINUSCA troops are struggling to contain violence in Bangui. Ongoing fighting between the anti-balaka, factions of ex-Séléka and other armed groups, as well as between international peacekeepers and these groups, has increased the risks to civilians.

Clashes are ongoing in prefectures that split CAR between North and South and East and West. The country is now effectively partitioned, with anti-balaka controlling territory in western CAR and ex-Séléka factions establishing control in the east. Deadly attacks on civilians continue to be conducted openly and without fear of sanction. Armed groups also continue to exploit natural resources to fund their activities.

The 23 July ceasefire agreement faces numerous challenges. The ex-Séléka rebel alliance has fragmented into various factions that, as with the anti-balaka, do not operate under central command. Leaders of various armed groups are seeking to secure amnesty and political concessions in advance of the upcoming Bangui Forum on National Reconciliation scheduled for February 2015.

Preparing to hold elections later this year without significant improvements in security, accountability and dialogue amongst communities will only increase the risk of further mass atrocity crimes.

CAR's interim government is still unable to uphold its Responsibility to Protect and requires sustained international assistance.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

Following the deadly surge in violence during late 2013, the international community intensified its response to the crisis in CAR, including passing four UNSC resolutions between October 2013 and April 2014 that emphasized the interim government's responsibility to protect the civilian population. [For response prior to July 2014, see [GCR2P's Timeline of the International Response to the Situation in CAR.](#)]

On 7 July the International Contact Group for CAR (ICG-CAR) outlined a process to end hostilities and promote national dialogue and reconciliation. A forum held in Brazzaville, Congo, between 21 and 23 July led to the aforementioned ceasefire agreement. The ICG-CAR met for the sixth time on 11 November.

MINUSCA assumed authority from the previous African Union (AU) peacekeeping mission, MISCA, on 15 September. The force is currently comprised of approximately 7,450 personnel, including 5,800 "re-hatted" MISCA troops. MINUSCA and the Transitional Authorities signed a memorandum of understanding on 8 August creating a Special Criminal Court to be composed of national and international judges that will investigate atrocities and bring those responsible to justice.

On 24 September the Chief Prosecutor of the ICC announced she would be opening an investigation and stated that the ex-Séléka and anti-balaka have committed crimes against humanity and war crimes, including murder, rape, forced displacement, persecution, attacks against humanitarian missions and the use of child soldiers. The situation was referred to the ICC by CAR authorities on 30 May 2014.

On 7 November the EU Council of Ministers extended EUFOR-RCA's deployment until March 2015. The UNSC adopted Resolution 2181 on 21 October, mandating the extension.

The UNSC issued a Presidential Statement on 18 December encouraging CAR's Transitional Authorities to accelerate preparations for the Bangui Forum on National Reconciliation.

NECESSARY ACTION

Urgent financial and human resources are needed to establish the Special Criminal Court and ensure accountability for mass atrocity crimes. The UNSC should also authorize targeted sanctions against additional individuals and entities responsible for violating IHL and international human rights law.

French, EU and UN forces must disarm all groups that threaten civilians. MINUSCA must ensure it reaches full operational

capacity and deploys in adequate numbers to all areas where vulnerable civilian populations remain unprotected. MINUSCA, in coordination with the Transitional Authorities, should facilitate the evacuation and relocation of populations that wish to leave besieged areas.

Local efforts to ease tensions between communities should be supported by international mediators as part of a broader strategy of national reconciliation. There is an urgent need for regional and international interlocutors to support the transitional government's attempts to promote disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of armed groups.

MORE INFORMATION

- » [MINUSCA Website](#)
- » [Final Report of the UN Panel of Experts on CAR S/2014/762](#), 1 November 2014
- » [Final Report of the UN Commission of Inquiry on CAR S/2014/928](#), 19 December 2014
- » [GCR2P Populations at Risk: Central African Republic](#)



10,000+ people killed during 2014

1.5 million+ IDPs since the May 2013 state of emergency

NIGERIA

Mass atrocity crimes perpetrated by the extremist group Boko Haram have intensified as Nigeria prepares for 14 February general elections. Excessive use of force by the security forces also contributes to the threat of further atrocities.

BACKGROUND

On 8 January reports emerged that Boko Haram had seized and burned down the major northern border town of Baga, Borno state, and as many as 16 surrounding villages, killing large numbers of civilians. Facing increased violence and destabilization caused by Boko Haram, including the capture of a multinational military base in Baga, governors from Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states requested President Goodluck Jonathan deploy extra troops to secure the northeastern states ahead of the 14 February elections.

Boko Haram began seizing and holding territory in July 2014, in addition to continuing its traditional “hit-and-run” attacks. The group has expanded its control to more than 20 towns in the northeast covering territory in excess of 20,000 square kilometers. While some previously captured towns have partially returned to government control, grave fears exist for civilians trapped in Boko Haram-run areas, most of whom are cut off from humanitarian access.

Boko Haram has been perpetrating attacks against civilians since 2009 and is committed to overthrowing Nigeria's secular government and establishing an Islamic state. Boko Haram's leader, Abubakar Shekau, has vowed to kill all Muslims who “follow democracy” and has said that Boko Haram is at war “against Christians and democracy.”

While Boko Haram has primarily perpetrated attacks in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states, since April 2014 the group has significantly widened the scope of its operations, carrying out attacks in Abuja as well as in Gombe, Jigawa, Kano, Kaduna, Niger and Plateau states. In addition, cross-border raids into Cameroon have intensified in recent months.

The state of emergency declared by President Jonathan for Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states in May 2013 ended on 20 November 2014 when the parliament rejected his request for an extension. Despite the state of emergency, Boko Haram attacks had escalated, with more than 10,000 people killed in Boko Haram-related violence during 2014. The National Emergency Management Agency reported that more than 1.5 million people were displaced during the state of emergency, while UNHCR has estimated that 200,000 Nigerians have fled to neighboring countries.

Nigerian security forces have been consistently accused of failing to provide sufficient protection to civilians from Boko Haram. There have been numerous reports of soldiers deserting their posts during Boko Haram attacks, including during the seizure of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) base in Baga. Nigerian security forces have also been accused of committing grave human rights violations, including extrajudicial killings, against suspected Boko Haram members. On 5 August Amnesty International reported evidence of “multiple war crimes” carried out by the Nigerian military. The “Civilian Joint Task Force,” a collection of civilian vigilante groups formed in response to Boko Haram, has also been implicated in grave human rights abuses.

ANALYSIS

The Nigerian government has been unable to contain the Boko Haram insurgency within its borders. Northern Nigeria has been rendered ungovernable by the ongoing violence.

General elections scheduled for 14 February present numerous challenges, including concerns regarding the ability of the government to conduct voting in states affected by Boko Haram violence. The disenfranchisement of large portions of the population, including refugees and IDPs, will endanger the

legitimacy of the elections. Boko Haram's opposition to the democratic process and frequent attacks on public gatherings also significantly increases the threat to voters.

Boko Haram attacks exacerbate existing social, ethnic and religious tensions, heightening the possibility of renewed inter-communal violence. Civilian displacement and ongoing insecurity have increased unemployment and poverty within Africa's largest economy. In addition to military measures, the government's Soft Approach to Countering Violent Extremism Program and political reforms addressing poor governance and corruption are crucial to confronting the root causes of conflict.

The security forces have failed to investigate multiple allegations of arbitrary detention, torture and extra-judicial killing of suspected Boko Haram members, actions which violate international human rights law and may constitute crimes against humanity. The government is also unable to meet the urgent humanitarian needs of displaced and vulnerable communities in northeast Nigeria.

The government of Nigeria is struggling to uphold its Responsibility to Protect and needs the ongoing support of the international community.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

The April abduction of 276 schoolgirls in Chibok drew unprecedented international attention to the threat posed by Boko Haram during 2014.

During the Paris Summit of 17 May and the London Ministerial meeting of 12 June on the security situation in Nigeria, regional and international partners committed to increase coordinated action against Boko Haram. On 23 July Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Cameroon pledged to mobilize the MNJTF, a regional initiative aimed at defeating Boko Haram, with each state contributing 700 troops. On 25 November the AU Peace and Security Council expressed "full support" for the MNJTF. Following Boko Haram's seizure of the MNJTF base, the future of the force is unclear.

Nigeria is currently an elected member of the UNSC. On 10 November the UNSC issued a Press Statement condemning a Boko Haram bomb attack on a school in Potiskum, Yobe state, which killed at least 48 people. The UNSC has not passed a

resolution on the rapidly deteriorating security situation in Nigeria.

NECESSARY ACTION

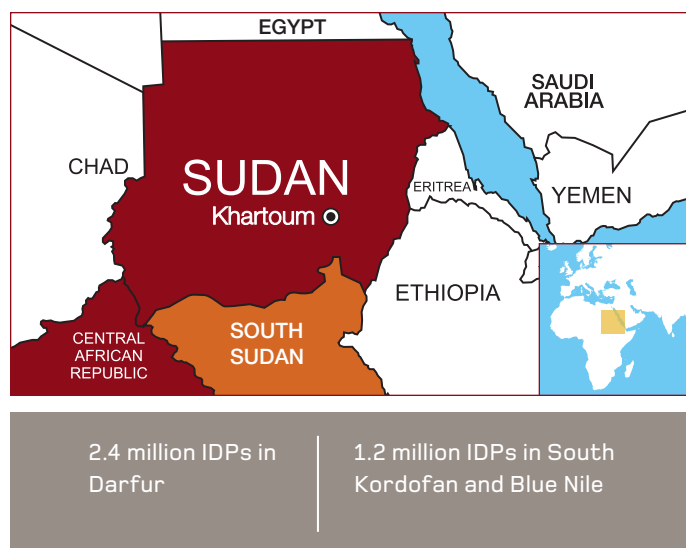
Greater regional and international cooperation is necessary to defeat Boko Haram and hold perpetrators of mass atrocities accountable. The UNSC should assume a more active role in addressing the situation by supporting regional efforts to defeat the insurgency, including through the MNJTF. The AU, Economic Community of West African States and states with significant bilateral ties to Nigeria, should assist the Nigerian government in meeting humanitarian needs of affected communities.

With international support, the government needs to urgently undertake security sector reform to ensure that the army and police are trained to protect civilians and prevent mass atrocities while respecting human rights. The government should also conduct investigations into alleged abuses committed by the military against civilians.

As Nigeria prepares for the 14 February general elections, politicians should refrain from inflammatory statements that could deepen religious, ethnic and inter-communal divisions. Nigerian authorities must ensure that security forces are able to adequately protect all Nigerians and enable them to participate in the democratic process.

MORE INFORMATION

- » [UNSC Press Statement, SC/11639-AFR/3014](#), 10 November 2014
- » [Nigeria Security Tracker](#), Council on Foreign Relations
- » ["Communiqué of the 469th meeting of the PSC on the Boko Haram terrorist group and on the efforts of the countries of the region within the framework of LCBC,"](#) 25 November 2014
- » [GCR2P Populations at Risk: Nigeria](#)



SUDAN

Populations in South Kordofan and Blue Nile continue to face mass atrocity crimes perpetrated by the Sudanese Armed Forces and affiliated armed groups. Populations in Darfur are also at risk of mass atrocities due to ongoing inter-communal violence and attacks by government forces.

BACKGROUND

Almost three years since the UNSC adopted Resolution 2046, calling for a negotiated settlement to the conflict in South Kordofan and Blue Nile, the government and armed rebels of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) continue to engage in hostilities that directly threaten civilians. The government has prohibited access to South Kordofan and Blue Nile and is systematically preventing aid from reaching populations at risk of starvation.

Following the end of the May through November rainy season, there has been an increase in indiscriminate aerial bombardments and renewed ground offensives in both South Kordofan and Blue Nile. Since 19 December heavy fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and SPLM-N has been reported near the strategic town of Daloka, South Kordofan. Major clashes also took place near Bok, Yabous and Shali in Blue Nile. On 13 January the SAF claimed to have recaptured Alqinezhiah and Angarto, both in South Kordofan, from the SPLM-N following a week-long offensive.

Since June 2011 the SAF has conducted a counterinsurgency campaign in South Kordofan against the SPLM-N, a rebel group that fought alongside forces associated with the government of South Sudan during the 1983-2005 civil war. These forces have also been fighting in neighboring Blue Nile since the conflict expanded during September 2011. The ongoing conflict has led to the internal displacement of over 1.2 million civilians, while more than 243,500 have fled to South Sudan and Ethiopia. According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, approximately 240,000 people in Blue Nile require urgent humanitarian assistance.

The SAF has committed war crimes, including extrajudicial killing, forced displacement and widespread sexual violence against civilians in South Kordofan and Blue Nile. The SAF has also engaged in "scorched earth" tactics, including the systematic targeting of food sources and deliberate destruction of civilian structures. The SPLM-N has also perpetrated war crimes including indiscriminate attacks on civilian populated areas as well as the alleged recruitment of children.

Sudan has consistently failed to honor AU-brokered agreements and UNSC resolutions calling for a cessation of hostilities. This includes the failure to end aerial bombardments, disarm pro-government militias and allow humanitarian access. On 25 December the government ordered the expulsion of the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator and the UN Development Programme Country Director. The UN Secretary-General called upon the government to reverse its decision.

The most recent round of talks between the government and the SPLM-N were held between 12 and 17 November under the auspices of the AU High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) for Sudan. On 15 November both parties endorsed an AUHIP-proposed draft framework agreement to resolve the conflict in South Kordofan and Blue Nile. However, fighting resumed shortly after.

The situation in Darfur also remains dire as civilians face ongoing inter-communal violence as well as SAF ground and air attacks. Fighting between the SAF and rebel groups contributed to the displacement of more than 430,000 people during 2014. On 26 November the UN Secretary-General released his latest report on Darfur, which noted 55 attacks against civilians with 23 allegedly perpetrated by the SAF. Over 700 civilians were also killed as a result of inter-communal violence between 22 July and 15 November.

The AU-UN hybrid peacekeeping force in Darfur (UNAMID) has criticized the government for restricting its ability to uphold its civilian protection mandate. On 4 November UNAMID entered Tabit, after initially being refused access by the SAF, to investigate allegations of the mass rape of approximately 200 women and girls. The UN Secretary-General noted that the heavy presence of military and police in Tabit "made a conclusive investigation difficult." The SAF has subsequently prohibited UNAMID from conducting further investigations despite the UNSC and UN Secretary-General calling for the government to allow unhindered access.

ANALYSIS

The government has a history of perpetrating atrocities in Darfur and during its civil war with the south. It has consistently defied external pressure to halt mass atrocity crimes. Such crimes are currently being committed in South Kordofan and Blue Nile, where patterns of violence targeting civilians for their perceived support of the SPLM-N have been witnessed for more than three years.

Both the government and the SPLM-N have continued attacks against civilian areas despite negotiations. The UNSC and AU have failed to push the government and the SPLM-N to honor agreements on the cessation of hostilities and delivery of humanitarian assistance.

Indiscriminate bombings of rebel-held areas demonstrate an unwillingness to distinguish between combatants and civilians, actions that violate IHL and may amount to crimes against humanity. The government also continues to block UN agencies and independent media from access to South Kordofan and Blue Nile. The intensification of bombing during the May through August planting season, combined with the refusal to allow humanitarian access, may demonstrate a deliberate strategy of denying food supplies to vulnerable civilian populations.

Despite the presence of UNAMID, civilians have not been afforded adequate protection in Darfur. Ongoing inter-communal violence and SAF operations contribute to the risk of further mass atrocity crimes.

Not only is the government of Sudan manifestly failing to uphold its Responsibility to Protect, it is directly responsible for perpetrating mass atrocity crimes in South Kordofan, Blue Nile and Darfur.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

The UNSC has adopted 56 resolutions on Sudan since 2004, most of which have not been fully implemented. Acting on behalf of the AUHIP, former South African President Thabo Mbeki has facilitated regular talks between the government of Sudan and the SPLM-N since 2011. [See also, [GCR2P's Timeline of International Response to the Situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States.](#)]

Members of the current government, including President Omar al-Bashir, the Defence Minister, Abdel Raheem Muhammad Hussein, and the current governor of North Kordofan, Ahmad Haroun, were indicted by the ICC in 2007 for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Darfur. The ICC also issued a warrant for President Bashir in 2010 for perpetrating genocide in Darfur. On 11 September the ICC issued an arrest warrant against Darfur rebel leader Abdallah Banda on war crimes charges for his alleged role in an attack on AU peacekeepers during September 2007 in northern Darfur.

On 12 December the Chief Prosecutor of the ICC suspended the Darfur investigation due to the failure of the UNSC to meaningfully assist in the arrest of indicted suspects.

On 18 December the AU Peace and Security Council extended the AUHIP's mandate until 31 December 2015.

NECESSARY ACTION

The government and the SPLM-N, in accordance with UNSC Resolution 2046, must cease hostilities and address the underlying causes of the conflict. The UNSC should expand the arms embargo on Darfur to include South Kordofan and Blue Nile.

The UNSC and AU must ensure the government and the SPLM-N facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance to populations in South Kordofan and Blue Nile, as stipulated in the 2011 Framework Agreement and 2012 cooperation agreements. States with major investments in Sudan, including China, Qatar and Saudi Arabia, should press the government to fulfill its commitments.

The UNSC's review of UNAMID should emphasize civilian protection as a key strategic priority. The government must stop obstructing UNAMID and allow them to conduct investigations into gross human rights violations. Mediation efforts should be facilitated between the government and armed groups operating in Darfur.

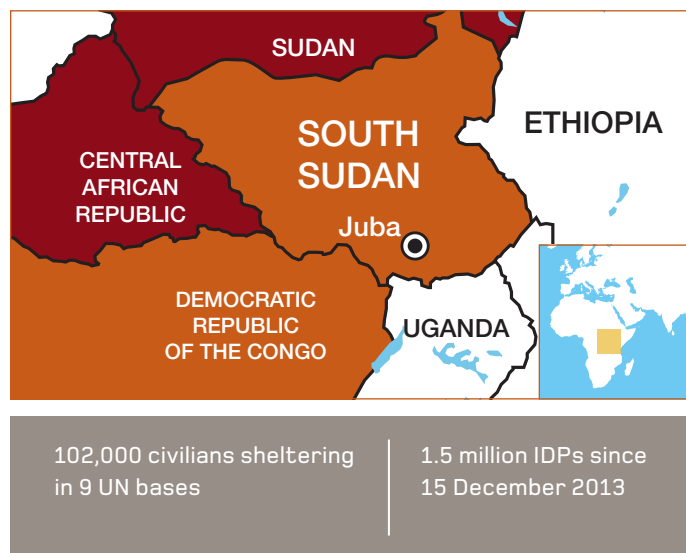
Crimes against humanity and war crimes perpetrated in South Kordofan, Blue Nile and Darfur must be thoroughly investigated. The UNSC should mandate the establishment of an independent international commission of inquiry for South Kordofan and Blue Nile.

MORE INFORMATION

- » [UNISFA Website](#)
- » [UNAMID Website](#)
- » [UN Secretary-General's Report on the implementation of UNAMID, S/2014/852, 26 November 2014](#)
- » [GCR2P Populations at Risk: Sudan](#)

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.

**SOUTH SUDAN**

The escalation of renewed fighting in South Sudan's civil war puts civilians at imminent risk of further mass atrocity crimes.

BACKGROUND

Despite the signing of multiple peace agreements, fighting between rebel forces and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) continues. On 26 November heavy fighting broke out in Fangak county, Jonglei state. By 8 December these clashes had resulted in the displacement of approximately 25,000 civilians. The UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) reported troop mobilization and sporadic fighting in other parts of Jonglei state in late November. During December and January rebel forces also launched major attacks on government positions in Unity and Upper Nile states.

The civil war is the result of a conflict that started on 15 December 2013 between SPLA soldiers from rival political and ethnic groups. Since then, tens of thousands of civilians have been killed and 1.5 million displaced, including over 102,000 who have sought refuge in nine UNMISS bases across the country.

The civil war began after President Salva Kiir accused Riek Machar, the former Vice President who was removed from office during July 2013, of an attempted coup. The worst fighting continues to be between ethnic Dinka and Nuer soldiers loyal to President Kiir and Machar, respectively. At least two dozen armed militias aligned with either side are now operating in South Sudan, including the powerful Nuer White Army.

Over the past year civilians have been subjected to horrific attacks perpetrated by both government forces and armed

rebels, including extrajudicial killings, ethnic targeting, sexual violence and the use of child soldiers. In a special human rights report published on 19 December, UNMISS accused rebel forces of targeted attacks against civilians after temporarily seizing control of Bentiu on 29 October. UNMISS' investigation found that rebel forces committed abuses which "may amount to war crimes."

Both sides of the civil war violated a 23 January 2014 Cessation of Hostilities (COH) agreement almost immediately after it was signed. Following further negotiations, President Kiir and Machar signed a 9 May peace agreement, which called for "an immediate cessation of hostilities within 24 hours." The parties then failed to meet a 10 August deadline to form a transitional government shortly before a temporary resumption of large-scale armed hostilities during August.

Following another lull in major fighting and a 7 November summit, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) announced a deal that included recommitment to the COH and the formation of a transitional government. IGAD threatened to impose regional sanctions and directly intervene to protect civilians if both parties did not consent to the agreement within 15 days. Fighting resumed two days later. The latest round of IGAD-sponsored talks broke down on 22 December. None of the threatened sanctions or other actions have been implemented.

ANALYSIS

The rapid descent into civil war in late 2013 highlights the fragility of South Sudan's government as well as the SPLA's political and ethnic divisions, which have allegedly resulted in 70 percent of the army either defecting or deserting. The proliferation of armed militias increases the risk to civilians.

More than a year after the start of the conflict the failure to uphold multiple peace agreements reveals a lack of commitment to a political solution. UNMISS warned in September that both parties to the conflict were mobilizing forces and amassing weapons ahead of the dry season.

Despite evidence of systematic killings, sexual violence and child recruitment, neither the government nor opposition have held perpetrators within their own ranks accountable.

South Sudan requires international assistance to reestablish security throughout the country and ensure accountability for mass atrocity crimes. With ongoing resource deficits and a hostile operating environment, UNMISS is struggling to support the government in upholding its Responsibility to Protect.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

In order to support UNMISS' efforts to implement its protection of civilians mandate, the UNSC adopted Resolution 2132 on 24 December 2013, temporarily enlarging UNMISS by an additional 5,500 troops and 440 police. So far only 3,488 additional troops have been deployed. On 22 December China announced that they would be deploying 700 troops by March 2015.

During March the AU established a Commission of Inquiry to investigate human rights violations committed since December 2013 and make recommendations on appropriate accountability and reconciliation measures. The Commission has not yet released its findings. [For responses prior to November 2014, see [GCR2P's Timeline of International Response to the Situation in South Sudan](#).]

On 25 November the UNSC adopted Resolution 2187, extending UNMISS' mandate until 30 May 2015. The resolution noted that the "Government of South Sudan bears the primary responsibility to protect civilians within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction, including from potential crimes against humanity and war crimes."

The UNSC issued a Presidential Statement on 15 December, marking the one-year anniversary of the conflict and calling upon both parties to refrain from further violence. The statement reiterated that the UNSC was considering targeted sanctions against those impeding the peace process.

China mediated talks between the two parties on 12 January in Khartoum, Sudan.

NECESSARY ACTION

President Kiir and Machar must abide by commitments made under the COH and meaningfully engage with IGAD to resolve the crisis. The UNSC and IGAD should immediately impose an arms embargo and targeted sanctions on all political and military leaders, regardless of rank or affiliation, deemed responsible for a resumption of armed hostilities or previous mass atrocities.

UNMISS must robustly implement its civilian protection mandate. The international community should enhance UNMISS' capabilities through the rapid provision of additional troops and additional aviation assets. The government must ensure that UNMISS has the ability to move freely to all parts of the country.

UNMISS' Human Rights Division and the AU Commission of Inquiry must continue their investigations of extra-judicial killings and publish their findings. The government must hold all perpetrators of mass atrocities accountable, regardless of affiliation or position.

The government of South Sudan should initiate a comprehensive strategy aimed at ethnic and political reconciliation.

MORE INFORMATION:

- » [UNMISS Website](#)
- » [UN Secretary-General's Report on South Sudan S/2014/821](#), 18 November 2014
- » [UNSC Resolution S/RES/2187](#), 25 November 2014
- » [UNMISS Special Report: Attack on Bentiu, Unity State](#), 19 December 2014
- » [GCR2P Populations at Risk: South Sudan](#)



2.7 million IDPs

Approximately 300 FDLR
surrendered by 2 January
deadline

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Populations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo remain at risk of mass atrocity crimes perpetrated by various armed groups.

BACKGROUND

Pervasive insecurity in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has allowed armed groups to perpetrate mass atrocity crimes against civilians. Armed groups – such as the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) and various Mayi-Mayi militias – have been operating in the DRC for more than twenty years and continue to attack vulnerable populations.

Since defeating the March 23 (M23) militia in November 2013, the government has engaged in offensives against other armed groups in the eastern DRC with assistance from the UN mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) and its force intervention brigade. Despite the Armed Forces of the DRC (FARDC) and MONUSCO making significant progress against the ADF earlier this year, between 2 and 17 October the group attacked several villages in North Kivu, massacring more than 100 civilians, many of whom were killed with machetes. The ADF killed another 100 people in an attack on 20 November.

Patterns of violence committed by armed groups, including mass killing and abduction, have been witnessed with heightened

frequency in North Kivu, South Kivu, Katanga and Oriental Province since the FARDC was redeployed to confront M23 in April 2012. Violent clashes between rival armed groups also threaten civilians. On 18 November UNHCR warned of a “humanitarian catastrophe” in Katanga as more than 71,000 people were displaced between August and November by incidents of home burning, torture and forced recruitment into armed groups. There are still more than 2.7 million IDPs in the eastern DRC, including 680,000 in Katanga.

In advance of offensive operations, the government and MONUSCO encouraged militias to participate in Disarmament, Demobilization, Repatriation, Reintegration and Resettlement (DDRRR) programs. In April the FDLR announced plans to voluntarily surrender their weapons and during July the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and Southern African Development Community (SADC) established a final 2 January deadline. Despite this, only an estimated 300 combatants surrendered. The UN, AU, EU, Belgium and United States envoys (the “Team of International Envoys”) to the Great Lakes Region have called upon the government and MONUSCO to now take “all necessary measures to disarm the FDLR.”

ANALYSIS

The threat posed by armed groups remains high with populations at ongoing risk of further attack. During earlier offensives the FARDC and MONUSCO have struggled to adequately protect civilians. The FARDC has also been implicated in previous attacks upon civilians, including widespread sexual violence. If military measures are taken against the FDLR, civilians may be at risk of reprisal violence and a region that is already home to 1.6 million IDPs may endure further displacement.

The weakness of government structures undermines attempts to prevent atrocities. This is particularly evident in the eastern DRC, where the government has previously lost control of areas to various rebel groups. While the government has undertaken important reforms, impunity for crimes committed against civilians remains rampant.

Competition for control of minerals, as well as underlying conflict between communities that consider themselves indigenous and those with alleged Rwandan ancestry, contribute to the pervasiveness of violence. The failure to adequately address the root causes of conflict has enabled the proliferation of armed groups, which will continue to emerge and threaten populations even after the eradication of the ADF and FDLR if these issues are not resolved.

The government of the DRC has struggled to uphold its Responsibility to Protect and its own forces have been complicit in some previous mass atrocity crimes. The DRC needs ongoing international support to prevent recurring atrocities.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

The international community has responded to violence in the eastern DRC by taking measures to confront various armed groups.

MONUSCO’s mandate emphasizes the need to assist the government with security sector reform and DDRRR, increase accountability for mass atrocity crimes and combat the FDLR. The UNSC currently subjects 10 entities and 31 individuals in the DRC to sanctions. [For responses prior to December 2014, [see GCR2P’s Timeline of International Response to the Situation in the DRC.](#)]

On 1 December the Guarantors of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework (PSCF) for the DRC and the Region held its first meeting to review progress on implementation of the agreement.

On 2 January 2015 the Team of International Envoys condemned the FDLR’s failure to comply with the ICGLR-SADC disarmament deadline and called upon the government and MONUSCO to take decisive military action, emphasizing that disarming the FDLR is a regional and international responsibility. The UNSC issued a Presidential Statement on 8 January calling upon the government to initiate joint operations with MONUSCO against the FDLR.

NECESSARY ACTION

The DRC government and MONUSCO must ensure that the protection of civilians remains the primary priority as they address the threat posed by armed groups. Military offensives against the FDLR and ADF must include additional protective measures that mitigate the risk of retaliatory violence against civilians. The FARDC and MONUSCO must increase their capacity to respond to early warnings of attacks on civilians, particularly around Beni and Katanga.

MONUSCO should support the government in facilitating local peacebuilding initiatives and encourage civil society to help facilitate DDRRR.

The FARDC must not permit individuals who have previously committed atrocities to join its forces and should train all recruits in the protection of civilians, respect for human rights and IHL. The government should adopt legislation establishing specialized mixed chambers in the national judicial system to ensure justice for past atrocities.

Together with the UN Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, the AU, ICGLR and SADC must continue to ensure that signatories to the PSCF fulfill their commitments. PSCF signatories must ensure that all perpetrators of mass atrocities, including leaders of M23 and the FDLR, are held accountable.

MORE INFORMATION

- » [MONUSCO Website](#)
- » [Communiqué of the 1st meeting of the Guarantors of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region, 1 December 2014](#)
- » [International Envoys for the Great Lakes Region call for decisive actions against the FDLR, 2 January 2015](#)
- » [GCR2P Populations at Risk: DRC](#)

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.



139,000 people remain displaced by ethnic violence in Arakan/Rakhine state

BURMA/MYANMAR

Ethnic and religious minorities in Burma/Myanmar, especially stateless Rohingya and other Muslims, continue to face the threat of mass atrocity crimes.

BACKGROUND

Sporadic ethnic violence in Burma/Myanmar, combined with discriminatory state policies, continues to put the Rohingya, a Muslim minority group, at risk of mass atrocity crimes. Rohingyas are denied citizenship and other fundamental human rights. On 29 September 2014 at the UN General Assembly, the government outlined the “Rakhine Action Plan,” which would require Rohingyas to accept ethnic reclassification as “Bengali” in order to obtain citizenship or be forced into detention camps.

The former UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Myanmar, Tomás Ojea Quintana, has said that previous violence against the Rohingya could amount to crimes against humanity and warned on 30 May that the government’s failure to address the human rights situation in Arakan/Rakhine state “will ultimately mean the extermination of the Rohingyas.” Ongoing persecution has led tens of thousands of Rohingyas to flee to neighboring countries, where they are often subject to further abuse, human trafficking and refolement.

Attacks against the broader Muslim community have recurred since June and October 2012, when clashes broke out in Arakan/Rakhine state, killing nearly 200 people. Security forces have failed to adequately protect civilians and in some cases have been complicit in attacks. An estimated 139,000 people, mostly Rohingyas, remain segregated in IDP camps due to this violence. The government continues to block their access to healthcare and other vital humanitarian assistance.

Conditions for Burma/Myanmar’s other minorities also remain perilous, particularly in Kachin state, where a ceasefire between government forces (Tatmadaw) and the Kachin Independence Army collapsed over three years ago. Nearly 100,000 people remain displaced and in need of humanitarian assistance.

ANALYSIS

Anti-Rohingya and anti-Muslim violence is evidence of a grave communal fracture that the government is failing to adequately address. The government’s refusal to grant Rohingyas access to citizenship or lift discriminatory state policies, as well as its failure to restrict anti-Rohingya hate speech, encourages ongoing violations of their human rights. In March the government denied Rohingyas the ability to self-identify on the first national census since 1983. This constitutes a failure to comply with international standards and reinforces the dangerous perception of the Rohingya as ethnic outsiders.

Attacks by the Tatmadaw also pose an ongoing threat to civilians. With a pervasive culture of impunity, the military has not been held accountable for previous mass atrocity crimes.

The government of Burma/Myanmar is still failing to uphold its primary Responsibility to Protect.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

Following decades of military dictatorship, democratic reforms have contributed to rapprochement between Burma/Myanmar and the international community, including the lifting of sanctions by a number of countries. Burma/Myanmar held the chairmanship of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) for 2014. [For responses prior to November 2014, [see GCR2P’s Timeline of International Response to the Situation of the Rohingya and Anti-Muslim Violence in Burma/Myanmar.](#)]

At the Sixth Annual ASEAN-UN Summit on 12 November the UN Secretary General encouraged the government to “uphold human rights, take a strong stance against incitement and ensure humanitarian access to vulnerable Rohingya.”

On 29 December the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution expressing serious concern about the plight of the Rohingya and calling upon the government to allow freedom of movement, grant equal access to full citizenship and allow self-identification.

NECESSARY ACTION

The government of Burma/Myanmar must uphold its Responsibility to Protect all populations, regardless of their ethnicity or religion.

The government should abolish the Rakhine Action Plan and end institutionalized discrimination against the Rohingya, including the denial of citizenship. It must hold accountable all those who commit abuses, including inciting ethnic and religious violence.

In Arakan/Rakhine state the government must facilitate the safe, voluntary return of IDPs to their communities. Neighboring countries should offer protection to Rohingya asylum seekers.

The international community must urge the government to prioritize the development of a comprehensive reconciliation process. Remaining sanctions should only be lifted following a demonstrable improvement in the welfare of ethnic and religious minorities.

A central component of the government's reform process must include constitutional reform that addresses the needs of ethnic minorities, as well as the development of an independent judiciary as a means of safeguarding human rights and tackling the culture of impunity regarding mass atrocity crimes.

MORE INFORMATION

- » [UN General Assembly Resolution, A/RES/69/248](#), Situation of human rights in Myanmar, 29 December 2014
- » [GCR2P Populations at Risk: Burma/Myanmar](#)

General National Congress (GNC). Two rival Libyan governments, based in the eastern city of Tobruk and the western city of Tripoli, respectively, are now locked in a military struggle for territory and political supremacy.

A military campaign known as "Operation Dignity" was initiated by former Libyan General Khalifa Haftar on 16 May against Islamist militias in Benghazi. Elections to the House of Representatives, which would replace the GNC, were held on 25 June. Fighting among rival armed groups increased in the aftermath of the election, with several Islamist militias and their political allies refusing to accept the House of Representatives and new government. These militias, which recognize only the defunct GNC as the legitimate political authority, launched Operation "Libya Dawn" during July to counter Operation Dignity and secure effective control of the country.

Rival armed groups have indiscriminately shelled civilian areas and violated IHL. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad Al-Husein, has accused various armed groups of possible war crimes, while Amnesty International has reported that both sides have targeted civilians based upon perceived political allegiances. According to UNHCR there are currently more than 393,400 IDPs in Libya, with an additional 120,000 refugees in neighboring countries.

On 23 December the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights released a report detailing ongoing violations of human rights committed during clashes between various armed groups.

Ethnic Tawergha, who were forcibly displaced during the 2011 civil war, also face the ongoing threat of persecution and death. On 23 October the Chief Prosecutor of the ICC stated that the forced displacement of the Tawergha and ongoing attacks against them may constitute crimes against humanity and war crimes.

On 5 January the President of the House of Representatives called upon the League of Arab States to militarily assist the internationally-recognized government in its conflict with the GNC and "Libya Dawn."

ANALYSIS

With the House of Representatives and new government fleeing to the eastern city of Tobruk during August and the GNC governing in Tripoli, Libya has entered a period of intense political and humanitarian crisis.

Civilians remain at risk of war crimes due to indiscriminate shelling of population centers and a failure to distinguish between combatants and civilians. The persecution, detention and extrajudicial killing of people on the basis of tribal affiliation and presumed political loyalties continue. There is also evidence of competing regional powers providing arms or air support to either Operation Dignity or Libya Dawn.



393,400+ IDPs and 120,000 refugees	450+ people killed since 16 October in Benghazi
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LIBYA

Civilians in Libya are at risk of war crimes as a result of escalating fighting between various armed groups allied to either the internationally-recognized government or the "Libya Dawn" coalition.

BACKGROUND

Populations in Libya are at risk of mass atrocity crimes due to pervasive fighting between armed groups affiliated with either the internationally-recognized government or the former

The internationally-recognized government requires increased support to uphold its Responsibility to Protect.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

On 26 February 2011 the UNSC passed Resolution 1970, calling upon the former Libyan government to immediately cease attacks on civilians and uphold its responsibility to protect. Resolution 1973 of 17 March 2011 called upon UN member states to take "all necessary measures" to protect civilians and led to a military intervention. Following the end of Libya's 2011 civil war, international engagement to assist in rebuilding government institutions waned.

During June 2011 the ICC issued arrest warrants for Saif al-Islam al-Qaddafi and Abdullah al-Senussi, former head of military intelligence, for the alleged commission of crimes against humanity, but a legal disagreement over jurisdiction between Libya and the ICC continues.

UNSMIL was established in September 2011, but has significantly reduced personnel inside Libya due to pervasive insecurity. The Head of UNSMIL has attempted to facilitate mediation talks between the various sides of the conflict.

On 27 August the UNSC passed Resolution 2174, expanding the crimes punishable under the previously established sanctions

regime. On 26 November the UNSC released a Press Statement deploring recent violence against civilians and urging a peaceful resolution of the current conflict.

NECESSARY ACTION

All armed groups need to immediately cease targeting civilians and carrying out major military operations in population centers.

The Libyan government and ICC need to ensure that all those responsible for mass atrocities during the 2011 civil war, as well as those responsible for violations committed during the current conflict, are held accountable.

Breaking the culture of impunity, demobilizing and disarming armed groups, and establishing the rule of law remain essential. UNSMIL and the international community should support all efforts aimed at securing a negotiated solution to the conflict and meeting these objectives.

MORE INFORMATION

- » [UNSMIL Website](#)
- » ["Libya: Rule of the Gun: Abductions, torture and other militia abuses in western Libya,"](#) Amnesty International, 30 October 2014
- » ["Update on violations of International Human Rights and Humanitarian Law during the ongoing violence in Libya,"](#) UNSMIL and OHCHR, 23 December 2014.
- » [GCR2P Populations at Risk: Libya](#)

ACCOUNTABILITY WATCH

International Criminal Court:

On 5 December the Chief Prosecutor of the ICC withdrew charges of crimes against humanity against Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta, citing "severe challenges," including the Kenyan Government's non-compliance. Following the Palestinian authorities' submission of documents to the UN regarding accession to the Rome Statute, on 7 January the UN Secretary-General confirmed that Palestine will formally become a member of the ICC on 1 April.

Lord's Resistance Army:

Dominic Ongwen, a senior LRA commander indicted by the ICC in 2005 on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity, surrendered in CAR on 7 January. Uganda announced on 13 January that Ongwen will be handed over to the ICC for trial.



Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect

Ralph Bunche Institute for International Studies

The CUNY Graduate Center,
365 Fifth Avenue, Suite 5203,
New York, NY 10016, USA.

Phone: (+1) 212.817.2100

www.globalr2p.org

Email: info@globalr2p.org

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Executive Director

Simon Adams

Publications Officer

Jaclyn D. Streitfeld-Hall

Contributors

Evan Cinq-Mars, Ryan X. D'Souza, Sarah Hunter, Casey Karr, Nadira Khudayberdieva

To subscribe or inquire about the R2P Monitor please contact

jstreitfeld-hall@globalr2p.org

Phone: (+1) 212.817.1944