

Protection of South Sudan's one million internally displaced is eroding – UN expert warns

GENEVA – The protection of South Sudan's one million internally displaced persons is further eroding amid persistent violence and deliberate ethnically targeted attacks, United Nations Special Rapporteur Chaloka Beyani warned today.

Mr. Beyani, who visited South Sudan in November 2013, expressed his outrage at the deliberate attacks against areas where IDPs shelter. Last week's massacre in a mosque and ethnically targeted killings in a hospital in Bentiu and the attack against the protected site of the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) in Bor, left hundreds dead and many more wounded.

"The safety and security of the displaced populations must be the absolute priority for the United Nations to safeguard," stressed the independent expert tasked by the UN Human Rights Council to monitor, report and advise on the human rights of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the world.

Since the outbreak of this violent armed conflict in December 2013, almost one million South Sudanese became internally displaced. While about 80'000 IDPs sought shelter in protected areas of UNMISS sites, the majority of IDPs fled elsewhere.

"I strongly condemn any violence against IDPs in South Sudan," Mr. Beyani said. "I call on all parties to the conflict to abstain from all violence against internally displaced persons and other civilians, on all communities to desist from hate speech and use of force against each other, and on the international community to halt the erosion of protection in South Sudan."

"A solid and comprehensive strategy on internal displacement and strong safeguards for the protection of IDPs must be a priority now," the Special Rapporteur said, reiterating his call on the UN System and the international community from January 2014*.

The independent human rights expert also called for renewed and urgent efforts to decongest overcrowded UNMISS sites in Juba. "In the meantime," he underscored, "measures to further increase the safety of the protected areas must be put in place without delay."

(*) Check Mr. Beyani's media statement (31 January 2014):

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=14209&LangID=E>

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Chaloka Beyani, professor of international law at the London School of Economics, was

appointed as Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons by the Human Rights Council in September 2010. As Special Rapporteur, he is independent from any government or organization and serves in his individual capacity. Learn more, visit: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/IDPersons/Pages/IDPersonsIndex.aspx>

UN Human Rights, country page – South Sudan:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Countries/AfricaRegion/Pages/SSIndex.aspx>

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