



## AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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### Accountability critical to ending grave human rights violations in South Sudan

Speaking at the UN Human Rights Council today, Amnesty International said that although the formation of the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity started on 22 February,<sup>1</sup> serious human rights violations continue to be fuelled by impunity.

It said that non-state armed groups and government security forces still sporadically clash and fighting between ethnic groups has surged dramatically this year, with worrying UN reports indicating that more organized forces are participating in the violence.<sup>2</sup> The violence has resulted in abductions of civilians, killings of hundreds of civilians, sexual violence and the displacement of thousands.

The organization pointed out that respect for the right to freedom of opinion and expression remains under significant threat. Real or perceived government critics are at high risk of arbitrary arrest and prolonged detention.<sup>3</sup> For example, on 29 May, the National Security Service arbitrarily arrested and detained Kanybil Noon, a civil society representative member of a peace agreement body.<sup>4</sup> After 117 days in detention in poor health, without access to medical services and without charges, he was released on 22 September.

Amnesty International also said it regrets that the authorities have failed to take meaningful steps towards establishing the Hybrid Court for South Sudan, prompting over 250 civil society organisations, including South Sudanese, to request the AU in July to take unilateral action to establish the court immediately.<sup>5</sup>

It concluded its statement by asking the Commissioners to detail all major outstanding obstacles preventing the fulfilment of victims' right to truth, justice and reparations and whether they support the growing call for the Hybrid Court for South Sudan to be established by the AU unilaterally.

### Background

This public statement is based on an oral statement Amnesty International delivered to the Human Rights Council on 23 September 2020, during the interactive dialogue with the UN

<sup>1</sup> Amnesty International, South Sudan: Forthcoming unity government must reform security service and set up hybrid court ([Press release](#), 22 February 2020).

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), Escalating intercommunal conflict could unravel the peace agreement, 9 June 2020, <https://unmiss.unmissions.org/escalating-intercommunal-conflict-could-unravel-peace-agreement>.

<sup>3</sup> Amnesty International, Systematic harassment of civil society, journalists, private sector and critics by South Sudan's intelligence agency, Public Statement, (AFR/65/2727/2020).

<sup>4</sup> Amnesty International, "Urgent Action: Member of Peace Agreement Body Detained", 23 June 2020.

<sup>5</sup> Amnesty International and others, Letter to the AU Peace and Security Council regarding session on South Sudan, 16 July 2020, (AFR 65/2744/2020).

Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan.

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Amnesty International, Office for East Africa, the Horn and the Great Lakes, Riverside Studios,  
Riverside Lane, Nairobi, Kenya  
[www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org)

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