

Statement at 32nd session of the UN Human Rights Council

Item 4: Enhanced interactive dialogue on the human rights situation in South Sudan

Thank you Mr. President,

At the 31st session of the Human Rights Council, resolution 31/20 was adopted to establish a Commission for Human Rights in South Sudan. The evidence informing Member States at the time was captured in a harrowing report by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, A/HRC/31/49, including intimidation and attacks against human rights defenders, journalists and other civil society actors.

Mr. President, the status of human rights defenders in South Sudan remains unchanged, especially in areas such as Greater Equatoria where violence continues to prevail.

ISHR welcomes President Choi's announcement of last week as to the appointment of three members to serve on the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan. Namely: Yasmin Sooka from South Africa, Kenneth R. Scott from the USA and Godfrey M. Musila from Kenya.

We specifically call on the Chairperson, Ms. Sooka, to ensure that their fact-finding mission adequately investigates the situation of civil society organisations, in general, and human rights defenders in particular. The work of defenders is crucial to peace, security, sustainable development and a democratic future for South Sudan.

It is also imperative that the Commission take all such steps as are necessary to protect those who engage with it and prevent and promote accountability for acts of intimidation and reprisal.

ISHR looks forward to the Commission's report, scheduled to be presented as a comprehensive written report to the Council at its 34th regular session, in March 2017.

ISHR also reiterates the call on the transitional Government to avoid further delays in establishing the hybrid criminal court and other key institutions mandated by the peace agreement.

Lastly, we look forward to South Sudan's strong support for, and co-sponsorship of, the civil society space resolution being considered at this 32nd session.

Thank you, Mr. President.