

PRESS RELEASE

The South Sudan NGO Forum strongly condemns the heinous acts of gross systematic sexual violence committed against women and girls in Bentiu

Juba, December 3, 2018 – The South Sudan NGO Forum strongly condemns the heinous acts of sexual assault, including rape, committed against groups of women and girls in Bentiu, South Sudan.

Medecins Sans Frontiers (MSF) reported on 30th November that approximately 125 women and girls have sought medical treatment at their facilities over a ten-day period after having been raped and beaten as they walked to a food distribution site in Bentiu. The victims include girls as young as ten years old, the elderly and pregnant women.

“We are deeply concerned about the gender-based violence, including multiple acts of sexual violence against women and girls, reported to have occurred in Bentiu over the past two weeks,” said Dr Pius Ojara, Director of the South Sudan NGO Forum.

These acts demonstrate sexual violence in its most brutal form and constitute grave violations of human rights. The perpetrators are systematically targeting women and children, who are often the most vulnerable to abuse.

“Individuals should never be subjected to any form of sexual abuse that violates their bodily integrity; but it is particularly horrific and quite frankly appalling that these acts are happening during the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence,” said Dr Ojara. “This is also contrary to the spirit of hope that the Revitalised Peace Agreement ushered,” he added.

The NGO Forum members promote and practice zero tolerance towards sexual and gender based violence. We call on all relevant authorities to investigate these reports of brutal acts and those found responsible to be held accountable. The NGO Forum reaffirms the importance of ensuring that women and girls affected by sexual and gender based violence have access to confidential and dignified response services.

This incident highlights the importance of prioritising the protection of civilians at all times in line with the existing commitments by all parties.

About the NGO Forum

The South Sudan NGO Forum is an independent networking body of 330 NGOs, 214 national NGOs and 116 international NGOs that serves and facilitates the work of its members to effectively deliver the humanitarian and development assistance in South Sudan. The NGO Forum’s purpose is to support members to save lives and to improve lives.

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