

PRESS RELEASE

South Sudan NGO Forum strongly condemns violence against humanitarian workers in South Sudan and call for aid workers to be guaranteed protection under national and international law

Juba, December 9, 2019—The community of non-governmental organisations represented by the South Sudan NGO Forum, is horrified by the violence perpetrated against fellow humanitarian workers during the armed robbery of an NGO compound in Maban County on the 1st December 2019.

Collectively, and in solidarity with the affected organisation and its staff, NGO Forum members strongly condemn this heinous incident. We call upon all national partners of the humanitarian response in South Sudan to be even more active in the provision of safety and security of all humanitarians, enabling them to work free from fear of violence, as they respond to emergencies and contribute to building resilience across the country.

The theme of this year's 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence is ***"join hands: stand against rape."*** As a community, we are gravely concerned about the high incidence of Gender Based Violence in South Sudan. While **we welcome the news of the arrest of suspects in Maban, we strongly encourage a thorough investigation by national authorities that will bring the perpetrators to justice as soon as possible.** These acts of sexual violence constitute grave violations of human rights as well as a crime punishable by law. No individual should ever be subjected to any form of sexual abuse. No perpetrator should ever go unpunished.

Rama Hansraj, Country Director of Save the Children, South Sudan, said: "Our hearts go out to the survivors of this terrible incident and their families, we wish them strength. Those involved will carry the physical and psychological consequences of what happened for a long time to come. This is truly every humanitarian worker's nightmare and it has sent shock through us all. Sadly, such incidents happen all too often. In 2019, South Sudan was again ranked the most dangerous place for humanitarian workers - since January we have seen at least 53 cases of killing, wounding or detention of staff, with mainly national staff being a target, according to 2019 Aid Worker Security Report."

Rosalind Crowther, Country Director of CARE International, South Sudan added: "Men and women in the humanitarian sector face differing risks. While men in the humanitarian sector experience higher attack rates than women overall, women humanitarians are disproportionately affected by gender-based violence, including sexual assault and rape. "

The NGO Forum welcome the Government's engagement and support during the current 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence and call upon all duty bearers, in the spirit of this campaign, to ensure protection of all aid workers as they deliver lifesaving assistance throughout South Sudan.

The NGO Forum members promote and practice zero tolerance of sexual and gender-based violence; the Forum reaffirms the vital importance of the survivor-centered approach, ensuring that women and girls affected by sexual and gender-based violence have access to confidential, dignified response services and legal remedies.



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South Sudan NGO Forum

South Sudan NGO Forum comprises 116 INGOs and 263 NNGOs providing assistance to the people of South Sudan people regardless of ethnic background, political affiliation or religious belief to save lives and improve lives. NGO Forum provides a platform through which NGOs, the Government of South Sudan, the United Nations, donors and other external stakeholders can exchange information, share expertise and establish guidelines for a more networked, efficient and effective use of aid resources in South Sudan.

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